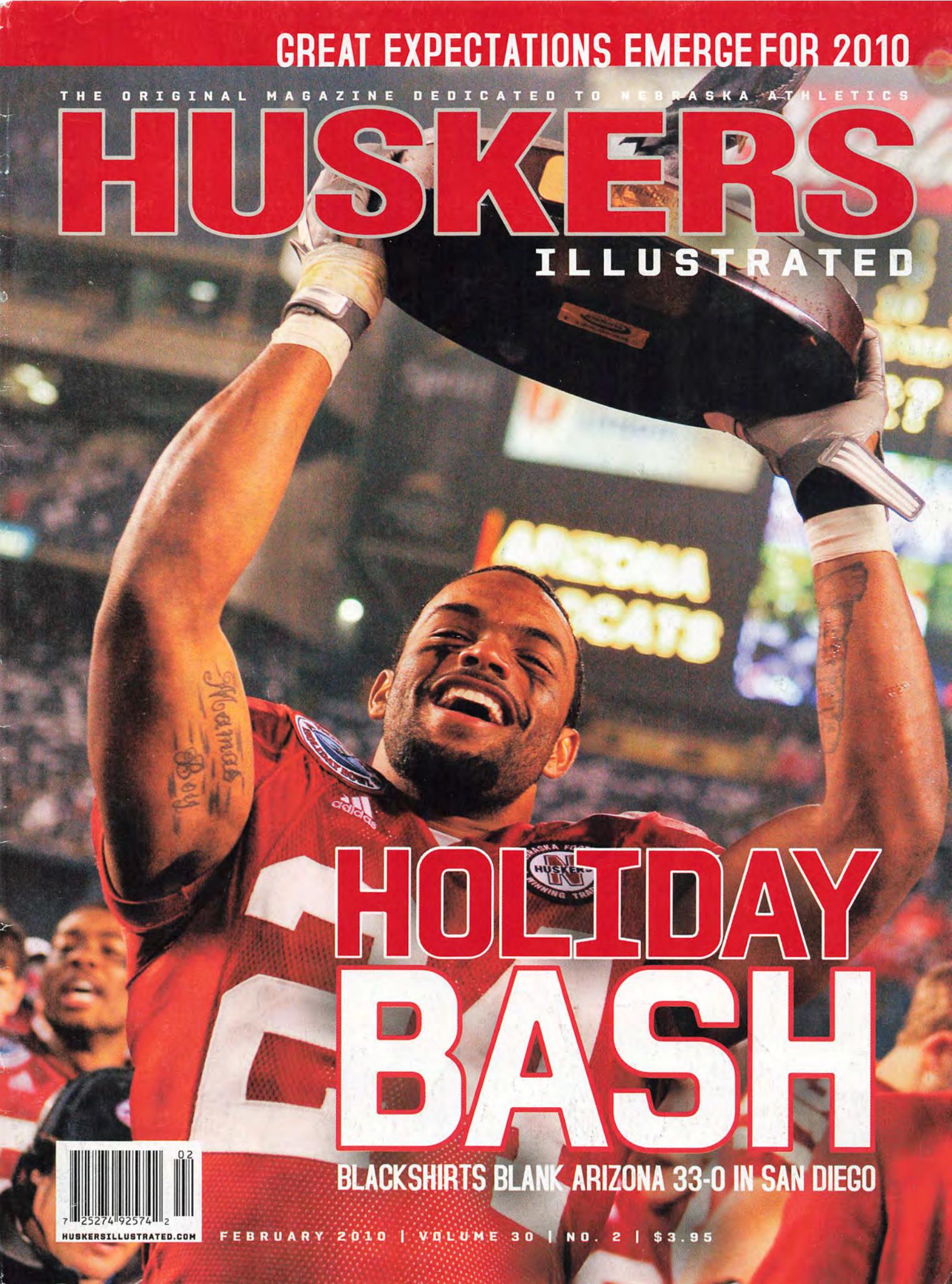


GREAT EXPECTATIONS EMERGE FOR 2010

THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO NEBRASKA ATHLETICS

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FEBRUARY, 2010 • VOLUME 30 • NO. 2

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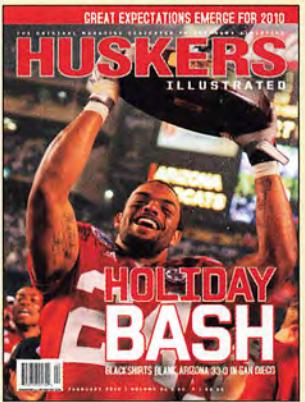
Volume 30, Issue 3, the annual Huskers Illustrated Recruiting Edition will be mailed on Monday, Feb. 15. Check for updates at huskersillustrated.com.

HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED

ON THE COVER

Junior receiver Niles Paul hoists his Holiday Bowl Offensive MVP trophy following Nebraska's 33-0 drubbing of Arizona in San Diego. Paul finished the game with four catches for 123 yards and a touchdown.

Photo by Scott Bruhn



EARLY FORECAST

Taking a peek at the 2010 season

SO BY THE TIME this issue arrives in your mailbox, you probably feel like you have a pretty good grasp on the state of the Husker football program.

You've declared to your friends that the Blackshirts are officially back after finishing as the nation's top-scoring defense. And while the Huskers cannot replace Ndamukong Suh, they must try to soften the blow by also replacing Phillip Dillard, Larry Asante, Matt O'Hanlon and Barry Turner.

There are certainly plenty of candidates (we'll cover those in a later issue), but Bo Pelini believes next year's defense could be even better.

That would be impressive.

You've scratched your head when it comes to the offense, or more likely shouted at the television and played armchair quarterback over the course of the past four months. But maybe you saw signs in the Holiday Bowl that there can be a solution to get the offense turned around.

But what's next? What should you expect for 2010 based on what we know as we approach February 1?

What Bo Pelini and his staff have accomplished in two seasons is remarkable and the defensive turnaround is nothing short of a miracle. But I think most coaches will tell you that taking the program to the next level, a national championship contender, is the toughest part.

With bigger achievements come new hurdles. Nebraska will need to lock down its targeted recruits and develop at least one superstar every few years. You know the type. Tommie Frazier. Grant Wistrom.



Eric Crouch. Ndamukong Suh.

The Huskers must avoid the bad stretches. Nebraska has lost back-to-back games in each of Pelini's first two seasons and is just 4-4 in the month of October. Avoiding those letdowns are key.

Fortunately, of eight teams Pelini has suffered losses to, each finished with a winning record and five went on to win a bowl game (the exceptions are Texas this season and Texas Tech and Oklahoma in 2008).

The Huskers have realistic expectations to finish the season in a BCS Bowl in 2010. They will likely open the season ranked near the top 10. The schedule should be favorable, as Nebraska will play its toughest conference foes at home (Texas, Missouri, Kansas and Colorado). The biggest road test will be a Sept. 18 matchup against standout QB Jake Locker and the Washington Huskies.

Of course the Huskers will also need a little luck – a bounce here, a call there and season without major injuries.

Next year's team will start to take on its new look in a couple of weeks as the Huskers wrap up the 2010 recruiting class. Of course we'll have our in-depth coverage in next month's annual recruit edition.

What does all this mean?

It might be early to make forecasts for next season, but it's not too early to dream. **N**

Send me your comments or story ideas to aaron@huskersillustrated.com.

HUSKERS

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EDITOR,
GENERAL MANAGER
Aaron Babcock

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Mike Babcock

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Mike Babcock, Terry Douglass, John Talman, Sean Callahan, Curt McKeever, Steve Sipple, Brian Rosenthal, Randy York, Bob Hamar, Sean Stevens, Mike Matya, Tommy Dahlk

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Scott Bruhn, NU Sports Information, Aaron Babcock, Randy Hampton and Rivals.com

SPORTS MARKETING & ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Tim Francis (800) 524-9527, ext. 111

SALES STAFF

Tim Francis, Aaron Babcock, Jeff Tuder, Chris Schmidt, Justin Jelkin

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E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Editorial: huskersillustrated@gmail.com

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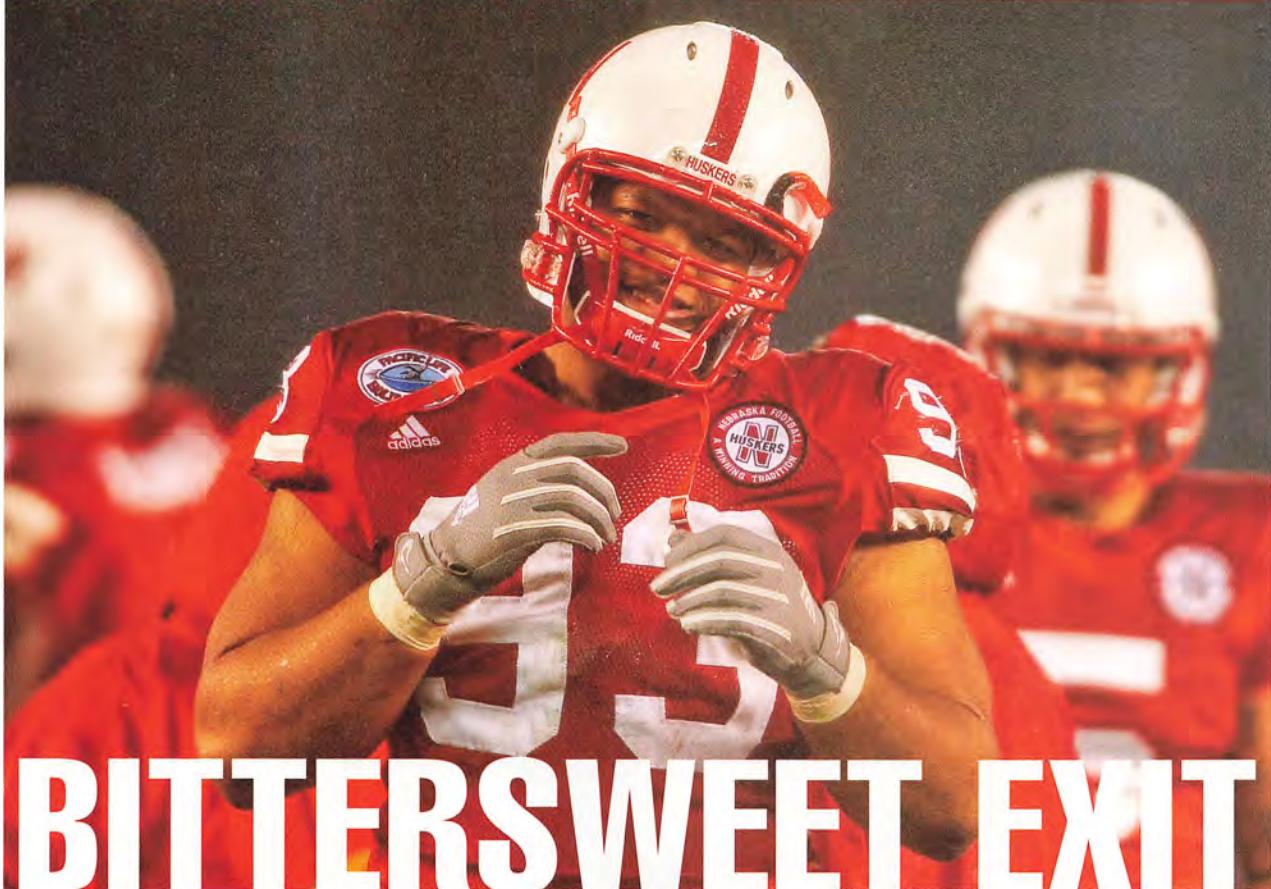


PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK

BITTERSWEET EXIT

No tears were shed, not by **NDAMUKONG SUH**. No way.

"I'm not a crier," he said following the Holiday Bowl game.

The game was his last as a Cornhusker, and as such, he was asked if the 33-0 victory against Arizona was bittersweet. "It's definitely bittersweet," Suh said. "I'm going to definitely miss playing for this program and this state of Nebraska. I mean, it's one of a kind, 86,000 people all in red."

That elicited thoughts of his final game at Memorial Stadium, a 17-3 victory against Kansas State in late November. Though he's not a crier, the Kansas State game brought "not an actual tear, but I felt sad that I had to leave that stadium. It was the last time

I got to play in there," he said. "But I know I can always come back and be on the sideline and enjoy it from a spectator point of view."

Suh will certainly be welcome after providing Cornhusker fans with entertainment the likes of which few defensive players have ever provided. For the second consecutive season, Suh led the team in tackles with 85, including 24 for losses and 12 sacks – for 77 yards in losses.

He also finished second on the team to cornerback **PRINCE AMUKAMARA** in pass break-ups with 10 (to Amukamara's 11), and

he was credited with 26 quarterback hurries.

Suh's Cornhusker legacy?

"Well, he's the most dominant defensive football player...I mean, I don't know all the history, but I find it hard to believe there's a more dominant football player, defensive football player, that's ever played at Nebraska," coach **BO**

PELINI said. "I'd say that in itself is pretty special."

Suh considered transferring to Oregon State following his sophomore season. But Pelini's arrival in 2008 kept him at Nebraska, for two seasons not one.

"I'm going to miss playing for this program and this state of Nebraska."

Ndamukong Suh

2 Minute Drill



REWARD, TOO

Bowl games are about business. But they're also a reward for the players in coach **BO PELINI**'s mind, which is why – as was the case in Jacksonville, Fla., for the Gator Bowl last season – he scheduled morning practices. "It gives them (players) a chance to enjoy the bowl experience," Pelini told the Lincoln Journal Star. You get your work done early."

HE'S BACK

Nebraska's 2010 schedule includes a Sept. 18 trip to Seattle to play Washington. Coach **STEVE SARKISIAN**'s Huskies, 5-7 in 2009, have reason for optimism. Quarterback **JAKE LOCKER** considered by-passing his senior season and declaring for the NFL draft before deciding to return.

The 6-foot-3, 226-pound Locker is among the most prolific passers in Washington history. He completed 230-of-394 passes for 2,800 yards and 21 touchdowns, with 11 interceptions.

His completion percentage (.584) was tops in the Pac-10.

2010 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 4/17 | Spring Game, 1 p.m. |
| 9/4 | Western Kentucky |
| 9/11 | Idaho |
| 9/18 | at Washington |
| 9/25 | South Dakota State |
| 10/2 | at Kansas State |
| 10/16 | Texas |
| 10/23 | at Oklahoma State |
| 10/30 | Missouri |
| 11/6 | at Iowa State |
| 11/13 | Kansas |
| 11/20 | at Texas A&M |
| 11/26-27 | Colorado |

BIG-GAME BO

Numbers don't always tell the tale. But consider these. In four post-season games with **BO PELINI** as head coach (three bowls and the 2009 Big 12 Championship), Nebraska's defense has allowed per-game averages of 12.3 points, 32.8 rushing yards and 173.8 total yards. That's dominance.

Here's another impressive defensive statistic. In 10-of-14 games this season, Cornhusker opponents completed less than 50 percent of their passes.

After a stellar junior year, he looked into by-passing his final season of eligibility and declaring for the NFL draft, of course.

In any case, Suh reiterated what he had said throughout the season one final time.

"It's been a blast since I've been here, and I'm super-happy I came back for my senior year," he said. "This is a great experience and I'm glad I got to end it off in the right way. Thanks to **ZAC (LEE)** and the rest of the offense and the great young guys that played with me on defense."

Pelini credited Suh and the others who finished their careers in San Diego. "They're a special group of men," he said. "I know

when he (Suh) talked to me last January, he wanted to have a long-lasting impact on this program. He felt that this year gave him that opportunity.

"I think he took advantage of that opportunity, as did **MATT (O'HANLON)** and **BARRY (TURNER)**, all the rest of the seniors. They're going to be able to look back on this season and say they had a tremendous, tremendous impact on the University of Nebraska football program."

They'll be able to look back, as well as come back "and watch the team win a national championship in the coming years," said Suh.

2 Minute Drill



BOWL BLACKSHIRTS

As has been the custom during bowl preparations, Nebraska awarded Blackshirts to deserving senior defensive players in San Diego: linebacker **COLTON KOEHLER** and end **DAVID HARVEY**. In addition, place-kicker and punter **ALEX HENRY** received a Blackshirt.

The junior from Omaha "was quite a weapon for us defensively, how he's punted and he's kicked, so that was very deserved, too," defensive coordinator **CARL PELINI** told the Lincoln Journal Star.

The black practice jersey was a bit large for the 175-pound Henery and had to be tied in the back.

RECRUITING EXPOSURE

Bowl games are valuable for several reasons, including additional practice time and an opportunity to work with players who have seen little action or have redshirted. They also provide recruiting exposure. And California – southern California in particular – is a prime recruiting area.

Nebraska coaches conducted a clinic after one of its practices in San Diego, with 100 or so high school and junior college coaches from the Los Angeles and San Diego areas attending.

The Huskers' bowl roster included 13 Californians, among them three from San Diego: wide receiver **MENELIK HOLT**, cornerback **ANTHONY WEST** and tight end **J.T. KERR**.

The others were: cornerback Dejon Gomes (Hayward), running back Roy Helu, Jr. (Danville), center Jacob Hickman (Bakersfield), quarterback Zac Lee (San Francisco), linebacker Eric Martin (Moreno Valley), quarterback Taylor Martinez (Corona), defensive end Cameron Meredith (Huntington Beach), defensive back Lazarri Middleton (Long Beach), safety Rickey Thenarse (Los Angeles) and defensive back Dijon Washington (Lawndale). Thenarse was injured. Kerr, Martinez, Middleton and Washington were redshirts.

SIDELINES



PRAISE FROM POLK

Former Cornhusker linebacker

CARLOS POLK was among those who visited Nebraska practices prior to the Holiday Bowl. Polk, who played in the 1998 Holiday Bowl, earned first-team All-Big 12 recognition in 1999 and 2000 and played eight seasons with the NFL's San Diego Chargers.

Polk, who now coaches at Grossmont College in El Cajon, Calif., praised **NDAMUKONG SUH**, telling the Omaha World-Herald: "He's a linebacker, a defensive back, a d-lineman all into one."

"You can line him up anywhere. Wherever you play, he can play, and I'm pretty sure he's going to be one of the best doing it. He's the truth. He is the truth."

Others who visited Nebraska practices in San Diego included long-time Cornhusker assistant **GEORGE DARLINGTON** and former Cornhusker place-kicker **JORDAN CONGDON**, a San Diego native who transferred to USC following his sophomore season in 2006. Darlington was recently let go by San Diego.

intheREDZONE

Huskers finish as nation's top defense

Following a practice in mid-November, defensive coordinator **CARL PELINI** was asked whether Nebraska's defensive improvement was a result of scheme or attitude.

"I think our scheme is good. But a lot of schemes are good," he said. "It's about players believing in it and keeping working at it and getting better at the fundamentals within the scheme."

"Your scheme can be great, but if your players can't tackle or cover or play up front, use their hands and whatnot, they'll not be very good. To me it's all in the players. They are a great group of guys. They've got a great work ethic. They're fun to coach for that reason."

"They get a little bit better each day. That's all you can ask for as a coach."

The basis of the question was the Cornhuskers' disastrous defensive play in 2007. Even though a few players who saw significant action in 2007 remained, among them **NDAMUKONG SUH**, **PHILLIP DILLARD**, **LARRY ASANTE** and **BARRY TURNER**, "it's a whole new group of guys, whole new chemistry," said Pelini.

"It's like comparing apples and oranges."

The same was true in comparing the 2008 and 2009 defenses.

"They're the same guys, but they're a lot more experienced within our system," Pelini said. "Our coaching staff is more comfortable as a staff, and working together. We've got a whole new, different dynamic and a whole new, different chemistry every year."

"So...it's hard for me to compare year to year. "The bottom line is constant improvement, never being satisfied, he said.

"I tell 'em Monday every time we play a little bit better we

Fewest Points Allowed All-Time

Ave (rank)	Year	Leading tackler
7.5 (10)	1964	(not recorded)
8.2 (3)	1971	Bob Terrio, LB - 96
8.3 (3)	1967	Wayne Meylan, MG - 119
8.3 (4)	1972	Rich Glover, MG - 100
8.4 (NA)	1966	Carel Stith, T; Lynn Senkbeil, LB - 82
8.5 (2)	1980	Jimmy Williams, E - 66
9.0 (9)	1965	Mike Kennedy, LB - 69
9.5 (1)	1984	Marc Munford, LB - 96
9.6 (4)	1981	Steve Damkroger, LB - 116
10.4 (1)	2009	Ndamukong Suh, T - 85
10.4 (9)	1979	Kim Baker, LB - 78

Bowl Shutouts this decade

2009 HOLIDAY BOWL: NEBRASKA 33, ARIZONA 0

2008 Sun Bowl: Oregon State, 3, Pittsburgh 0

2007 New Mexico Bowl: New Mexico 23, Nevada 0

2005 Neineke Car Care Bowl: NC State 14, South Florida 0

2003 Liberty Bowl: Utah 17, Southern Miss 0

just raise our expectations a little bit, expect a little more out of them. I think we're pushing 'em as hard now as we were two years ago, when we first got here, to keep getting better," said Pelini, "because, trust me, we've got a long way to go before we're where we want to be. There's always room for improvement."

The Blackshirts continued to improve, as the final statistics reflect. Nebraska finished the season ranked first nationally in scoring defense, allowing 10.4 points per game.

The last time (and only time) Nebraska led the nation in scoring defense was 1984, when it allowed an average of only 9.5 points per game. This season's 10.4 points-per-game average ranks 10th all time, tied with the 1979 team (which ranked ninth nationally).



By Comparison	2007	2008	2009
Scoring Defense	37.9 ppg (114)	28.5 ppg (80)	10.4 ppg (1)
Total Defense	476.8 ypg (112)	349.9 ypg (55)	272.0 ypg (7)
Pass Defense	244.7 ypg (84)	233.4 ypg (89)	178.8 ypg (18)
Pass Efficiency	130.22 (75)	133.95 (82)	87.28 (1)
Interceptions	8 (104)	12 (59)	20 (6/7)
Rushing Defense	232.1 ypg (116)	116.5 ypg (21)	93.1 ypg (9)
Red Zone Defense	NA	76% (19)	64% (1)
Sacks	1.08 pg (112)	2.69 pg (14)	3.14 pg (2)

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DEGREE IN HAND

Eight Cornhusker football players were among those participating in the university's winter commencement ceremonies: Ndamukong Suh, Larry Asante, Tyrone Fahie, David Harvey, Colton Koehler, Blake Lawrence, Derek Meyer and Matt O'Hanlon.

Former Husker Octavious McFarlin also received a degree.

Suh, whose degree is in construction management, took 12 credit hours during the summer to ensure graduating before turning attention to an NFL career.

"That's the way it was planned out," he said.

Whether his mom, a teacher, was more excited about his graduation or the Heisman Trophy presentation in New York City, "I'd probably definitely say she's a lot more happy to see me graduate," he said. "I'd definitely finish my degree, one way or the other."

"That was a given in my mind."

FUTURE FOE

The start of ESPN's coverage of the Holiday Bowl game was delayed because of its coverage of the Humanitarian Bowl. Nebraska had already scored its first

touchdown when Idaho scored a two-point conversion with 4 seconds remaining to defeat Bowling Green 43-42.

Bowling Green had taken a 42-35 lead with 32 seconds remaining.

The winning, two-point conversion came on a pass thrown by Idaho quarterback **NATHAN ENDERLE**, a junior from North Platte, Neb., who attracted some late recruiting attention from Nebraska.

The 6-foot-5, 227-pound Enderle completed 177-of-284 passes for 2,666 yards and 18 touchdowns with only nine interceptions in 10 regular-season games.

So what's the point here? Idaho is scheduled to visit Memorial Stadium on Sept. 11.

COACH JOE

Former Cornhusker quarterback (and Huskers Illustrated columnist) **JOE GANZ** has joined the Nebraska football coaching staff as an offensive intern. He will work with the strength and conditioning staff and the video department. He "can be a real mentor to all these young quarterbacks we have. They just need to listen," offensive coordinator **SHAWN WATSON** told the Lincoln Journal Star.

SIDELINES



TEAM AWARDS

No surprise here. **NDAMUKONG SUH**

SUH topped the list of Nebraska's team-award winners for 2009.

The winners were announced at Nebraska's annual team banquet in mid-December.

Suh joined senior center **JACOB HICKMAN** and junior kicker **ALEX HENRY** as all-season captains.

Suh also was named the team's MVP and defensive MVP, and the senior defensive tackle won the Chamberlin Trophy in a vote of media members.

Senior linebacker **PHILLIP DILLARD** won the Novak Trophy, also in a media vote.

The other team awards included: Offensive MVP – **ROY HELU, JR.**, running back

Special Teams MVP – Henery

Walk-on MVP – **TYLER LEGATE**, FB

Scout Team Offensive MVP – **RON KELLOGG III**, QB; **NICK ASH**, OL

Scout Team Defensive MVP – **JIM EBKE**, S; **KENNY ANDERSON**, DE

Cletus Fischer Native Son Award –

MATT O'HANLON, S

Bobby Reynolds Award – O'Hanlon

Pat Clare Award – **BARRY TURNER**, DE

Lifter of the Year – **JARED CRICK**,

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Great expectations emerge for 2010

BO PELINI was going to enjoy the Holiday Bowl victory, briefly. And then he was going to hit the road recruiting. "I'll enjoy it for a while, but there's a lot of work to do," he said. "It's a great way to end the year. It makes the off-season a lot better and . . . it gives you momentum. Like I said going in, I really believe we have a chance to continue this and be a heck of a football team next year."

Pelini isn't one to couch his optimism in coachspeak. "We look forward to that," he said.

"We've got to finish out this recruiting class and get to work."

The Cornhuskers, who finished the season at No. 14 in both polls, are being mentioned as a pre-season top 10 team in 2010. They haven't been ranked in the top 10 since mid-October of 2003, when they moved up from No. 12 to No. 10 following a 30-0 victory against Troy State.

The last time Nebraska was ranked higher than 10th was mid-September of 2002, going into a game at unranked Penn State – the Cornhuskers lost 40-7 and dropped to No. 20.

In any case, former coach and current ESPN personality **LOU HOLTZ** has predicted a No. 4 pre-season national ranking for Nebraska, while **ROBERT SMITH**, also of ESPN, has predicted a No. 5 ranking for the Cornhuskers. **MARK SCHLABACH** of ESPN.com ranks Nebraska No. 8.

Wrote Schlabach: "The Black Shirt defense is definitely back."

Schlabach has defending national

champion Alabama No. 1, followed by Ohio State, Boise State, Oregon, Texas, Virginia Tech and TCU. Iowa and Wisconsin round out Schlabach's top 10.

NationalChamps.net puts the Cornhuskers at No. 12 in its early pre-season rankings for 2010.

LEE'S ARM REPAIRED

Cornhusker quarterback **ZAC LEE** went home to California for surgery to repair a tear

in the flexor tendon of his right arm the second week in January. He is expected to participate in winter conditioning with the team, but whether he will be able to practice in the spring is uncertain. Following the Holiday Bowl, he indicated he wouldn't be able to throw for 10 to 12 weeks after the surgery.

"It's one of those things where you can try to rehab it and maybe it works, or you can get (surgery) done and it's going to work." He opted for the surgery.

FINAL AP TOP 25				FINAL USA TODAY POLL			
RK	TEAM	RECORD	PTS	RK	TEAM	RECORD	PTS
1	Alabama (60)	14-0	1500	1	Alabama (58)	14-0	1450
2	Texas	13-1	1399	2	Texas	13-1	1360
3	Florida	13-1	1370	3	Florida	13-1	1323
4	Boise State	14-0	1366	4	Boise State	14-0	1312
5	Ohio State	11-2	1224	5	Ohio State	11-2	1190
6	TCU	12-1	1163	6	TCU	12-1	1104
7	Iowa	11-2	1126	7	Iowa	11-2	1087
8	Cincinnati	12-1	1060	8	Penn State	11-2	1071
9	Penn State	11-2	1016	9	Cincinnati	12-1	943
10	Virginia Tech	10-3	953	10	Virginia Tech	10-3	940
11	Oregon	10-3	886	11	Oregon	10-3	846
12	Brigham Young	11-2	806	12	Brigham Young	11-2	814
13	Georgia Tech	11-3	768	13	Georgia Tech	11-3	741
14	NEBRASKA	10-4	724	14	NEBRASKA	10-4	671
15	Pittsburgh	10-3	697	15	Pittsburgh	10-3	667
16	Wisconsin	10-3	571	16	Wisconsin	10-3	587
17	LSU	9-4	501	17	LSU	9-4	530
18	Utah	10-3	491	18	Utah	10-3	466
19	Miami (FL)	9-4	310	19	Miami (FL)	9-4	336
20	Mississippi	9-4	296	20	USC	9-4	217
21	Texas Tech	9-4	224	21	Mississippi	9-4	192
22	USC	9-4	216	22	West Virginia	9-4	159
23	Central Michigan	12-2	166	23	Texas Tech	9-4	152
24	Clemson	9-5	125	24	Central Michigan	12-2	123
25	West Virginia	9-4	91	25	Oklahoma State	9-4	92
Others receiving votes: Oklahoma 90, Oregon State 89, Navy 85, Stanford 67, Oklahoma State 40, Rutgers 37, Auburn 8, Georgia 7, Florida State 6, Connecticut 5, Arizona 5, Middle Tennessee 4, Air Force 3, Arkansas 3, Villanova 2				Others receiving votes: Navy 89, Oregon State 78, Clemson 75, Oklahoma 67, Stanford 49, Auburn 17, Georgia 13, Houston 12, Middle Tennessee 12, Arizona 11, Arkansas 10, Connecticut 10, Florida State 9, Rutgers 7, Air Force 7, Northwestern 6, East Carolina 4, Southern Methodist 1			

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The honors **NDAMUKONG SUH** amassed were a tribute not only to his ability but also to the coaching of **BO PELINI** and **CARL PELINI**, as Suh regularly acknowledged. However, an even greater testament to what the Pelini brothers have provided the program, and the defense in particular, might best be reflected in the success of senior safety **MATT O'HANLON**, the Holiday Bowl defensive MVP.

You probably know O'Hanlon's story by now. Following an outstanding career at Bellevue East High School, he accepted a scholarship at South Dakota but left before classes began his freshman year in 2004. He enrolled at Nebraska in January of 2005, survived a tryout for the football team and walked on. He earned two letters playing special teams for Bill Callahan and then emerged as a starter under the Pelinis, receiving all-conference honorable mention this season.

He also was a first-team Academic All-Big 12 honoree, graduating with a history degree.

"Matt's a special player and a special young man . . . walked on, earned a scholarship; he's just come so far and meant so much to me, his teammates," Bo Pelini said after the Holiday Bowl. "I've been with him now for two years and (he) just keeps doing it. He does it week after week."

And even though his Cornhusker career is over, O'Hanlon might keep doing it.

"I think you're going to see him playing on Sunday," said Bo Pelini. "It's going to be like the same thing. People are going to write him off, and he's going to end up in a (NFL) camp and he's going to make a football team because he's a heck of a football player, and we're proud of him."

"I think he's the epitome of what Nebraska football's all about, in my opinion."

O'Hanlon was asked to react to Pelini's comments.

"You know, it's emotional," he said. "I've come a long ways, and I'm just so glad this coaching staff got here and just made the most out of everyone as a player."

"I think they're the greatest coaching staff in the country. So I'm glad we have 'em."



BELLEVUE, NE

BELLEVUE, NE

County: Sarpy

Population: 49,699

Distance from Lincoln: 46 miles

NU FOOTBALL LETTERMEN

Joe Adams, OG (1979-80)
Monte Anthony, IB (1974-75-76-77)
Reggie Baul, WR (1993-94-95)
##@Rik Bonness, C (1973-74-75)
John Custard, CB (1986-88)
Steve Hoins, OT (1974-75-76)
Tony Holloway, DE (1983-84-85)
Clester Johnson, WB (1993-94-95)
Jim Kotera, FB (1978-79-80)
Jon Marco, DE (1986-87-88)
Matt O'Hanlon, S (2006-07-08-09)
Stan Parker, OG (1984-85-86)
@Tim Rother, DT (1986-87)
Doug Seaman, C (1997)
Matt Senske, FB (2007)
Jeff Souder, DB (2005)
##@Mark Traynowicz, OL (1982-83-84)
Dale Zabrocki, IB (1976)
#All-American
@All-conference

DID YOU KNOW?

- In tribute to his deceased friend and best man at his wedding, Andrew Pawlek, Matt O'Hanlon had Pawlek's initials (ARP) and his high school jersey number (#25) inscribed on the small black patches under his eyes on game day.
- Bellevue is the oldest city in Nebraska. It was established as a fur trading post in 1822 and was incorporated in 1855.
- It is the state's third-largest city, behind Omaha and Lincoln.
- Offutt Air Force Base, home to U.S. Stratcom, is located on the southern edge of Bellevue.

SIDELINES

BRIEFLY

► **CHRIS WILLIAMS**, a linebacker from Abilene, Texas, and among the most prominent members of **BO PELINI**'s second recruiting class, left the team in December. Williams sat out this season while rehabilitating a knee injury, suffered his senior season in high school.

► **NDAMUKONG SUH** was named the Associated Press National Player of the Year, becoming the first defensive player so honored in the award's 12-year history.

► Sports Illustrated's **PETER KING** picked former Cornhusker coach **BILL CALLAHAN**, in his second season with the New York Jets, as the NFL assistant coach of the year.

► As you've, no doubt, heard by now, former Cornhusker quarterback and assistant coach **TURNER GILL** is the new head coach at Kansas, after four seasons as head coach at Buffalo.

► Nebraska had an honorary captain for the Holiday Bowl. In addition to **NDAMUKONG SUH**, **JACOB HICKMAN** and **ALEX HENERY** a representative of the

USS Makin Island, a naval assault ship, went to mid-field for the coin toss. He wore No. 8 jersey with "USS Makin Island" on the back. Players from both teams attended a Navy & Marine Corps luncheon on board the ship.

► **MATT O'HANLON**'s six interceptions this season were the most by a Cornhusker since 2003, when Josh Bullock set a school record with 10. They tied for the fifth-most in school history.



STATE OF THE HUSKERS

BY CURT MCKEEVER

A glimpse at what to watch for in 2010

WHAT WENT DOWN in San Diego at the Holiday Bowl should lead you to believe Nebraska will be hovering around the top 10 when next season rolls around.

Without a doubt, Bo Pelini has come up with an effective formula for post-season success. That's three bowls for the Huskers under Pelini, and three victories.

The 33-0 mauling of Arizona pushed NU to its first 10-win season since 2003, and has folks eyeing even greater riches for 2010.

And that's understandable, too, considering Nebraska loses only one starter on offense (center Jacob Hickman), and returns nine defenders who made at least five starts in 2009.

The Huskers also seem to have the frame of mind that would lead you to think they're ready for a banner -- as in Big 12 championship -- year.

Was Nebraska's offensive production in the Holiday Bowl - 396 total yards, including 223 on the ground - a true gauge that things will be significantly smoother in 2010? Or should we expect only gradual improvement from the unit that was 102nd in yardage this past season?

And how can the Huskers possibly be on the same level defensively as the 2009 bunch that finished with the nation's best points-allowed average?

Undoubtedly, you'll hear plenty of reasons throughout winter and spring, but here's a glimpse at the positions to pay the closest attention to, either because of late-season developments or attrition.

Given quarterback Zac Lee's season-

ending performance, Nebraska's offense would seem to have a decent chance of being markedly better in 2010. But, alas, Lee, will be sidelined up to 12 weeks following surgery on his throwing elbow, and he may not be able to cut loose during spring drills.

The play of Nebraska's offensive line will factor as much as Lee, and help is on the way.

Brent Qvale, Jeremiah Sirles, Nick Ash and Jesse Coffey all redshirted in 2009, and Sirles and Qvale were pushing for serious playing time before getting hurt. Their presence, along with the second-semester arrival of tackle Jermarcus Hardrick, should make for a more competitive spring and fall camp.

I-back Roy Helu, who spent most of his junior season battling injury and at the end watched freshman Rex Burkhead blossom into a difference-maker, also will get a run for his money.

Burkhead, who missed five games after breaking a bone in a leg, had a 100-yard day at Colorado and got 89 more in the bowl game (looking particularly strong running out of the wildcat formation).

But the rough-sailing passing game will be in the same boat if Nebraska can't find a wide receiver to complement Niles Paul. Late in the season, Brandon Kinnie looked like the one most likely to offer breakthrough help in 2010.

When the talk turns to the Blackshirts, Bo Pelini claims the Huskers will be better next season.

And, no, he didn't find more eligibility for Ndamukong Suh or fellow All-Big 12

strong safety Larry Asante, free safety Matt O'Hanlon, end Barry Turner and NU's comeback player of the year Phillip Dillard.

"It's all come together for us system-wise," defensive coordinator Carl Pelini said. "When that happens, you have such a chemistry, and you don't really worry as much about losing any specific individual parts of that system, because it's just clicking. We've really, philosophically, got it down pat."

On the interior line, Baker Steinkuhler is next in line to replace Suh, but he won't be a one-man army. Pelini likes the speed and power of Thad Randle (who redshirted). At end, Cameron Meredith played in every game, and Jason Ankrah (another redshirt) often practiced with the top units.

Cornerback will be the defense's strongest position, but it's behind Prince Amukamara, Alfonzo Dennard, Dejon Gomes and Anthony West where the biggest question mark lies. All eyes will be on safeties Eric Hagg and P.J. Smith, but don't forget about Rickey Thenarse, who's expected to receive a fifth year of eligibility. In 2008, Thenarse played in 11 games while sharing time with O'Hanlon.

And having Alex Henery back will give the defense some leeway to develop. All Henery did in 2009 was land eight of his punts inside the 3-yard line. He's also been a machine-like 50-for-57 on field goals in his career.

Another reason to believe 2010 will be bountiful for the Huskers. ■

Kyler Reed

6-3, 230, Redshirted Freshman, Tight End, Shawnee, Kan.

Hi: What's been your most eye-opening experience playing college football?

REED: Probably learning the offense. I struggled with it at the beginning, but I had a lot of help from the older guys and Coach (Ron) Brown. Just how much more complex it is from high school. In high school I had liberties to do almost what I wanted. That's probably the biggest shock.

Hi: What do you like the most about playing under Coach Ron Brown?

REED: Coach Brown's a real serious guy. What I like the most is he gets the most out of us. He's real demanding. I feel that he pushes us to the next level.

Hi: If you didn't play football, what sport would you be playing?

REED: I really like basketball, but I probably wouldn't have been able to play that very ... I mean, I'm all right. I'm mostly defense. So it probably would've been baseball or soccer. I used to like to play soccer a lot but it conflicted with football so I quit. I was a pretty good baseball player, actually. I played that through high school. Baseball I played center field, and soccer I was a forward.

Hi: Who's your favorite actor or actress?

REED: I really like Tom Hanks. It's either Tom Hanks or Denzel Washington. But "Saving Private Ryan" is my favorite movie, so I'll go with Tom Hanks.

Hi: If you didn't have football games every weekend, how would you spend your Saturdays in the fall?

REED: Well, I should be studying. But what would I want to do? If I didn't play football I'd probably want to go to the rec and try to play basketball. That way I could stay active. I like playing video games, and I like hanging with friends.

Hi: Why did you decide on Nebraska?

Reed: I didn't know much about Nebraska but they were kind of the team I liked. My dad is from the Omaha area, so he would watch the games and I would kind of watch them with him. It just felt right when I came up for the visits and the coaches came to visit me. Even after the coaching change, it just felt like this is where I needed to be. My dad grew up there (in Omaha) until college, and he went to college in Kansas. But I have a few family members up there. He went to Boys Town. That's where he went to high school. He lives back in the Kansas City area now.

Hi: So being from the Kansas City area, do you hear a lot from Kansas and Missouri fans?

REED: Mostly Missouri. Missouri has cockier fans than KU. There's actually a really good amount of Nebraska fans down there. In one of the neighborhoods I lived in, about every house had a Nebraska flag up. There's a lot of Nebraska fans. And KU's more about basketball, so they don't usually give us too much crap.

Hi: Who's your favorite professional athlete, somebody you would consider your idol?

REED: Walter Payton was my favorite player just because my dad had the old NFL tapes, and I used to watch those with him. That's back when I wanted to play running back. Right now, in the current NFL, I don't really have a favorite. I have a favorite team, the Broncos. But that's kind of hard, being from Kansas City. They give me crap for that. I have family that used to live in Denver. My grandpa's from there, so half my family's from there. And then Terrell Davis, another one of my favorite players, I used to watch him, and I just kind of liked the team as well.

Hi: If you could try out for any other position on the team, what would it be?

REED: I would want to play running back. Right now, though, I'd probably be more effective as a receiver than a running back, but if I had a choice, I'd definitely wish I could play running back again. I definitely miss it.



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Keith Wortman

A champion for recruiting chemistry



KEITH WORTMAN doesn't fully understand what made him say "No" to USC, UCLA and San Diego State and "Yes" to Nebraska four decades ago, but as time wears on, he's getting a pretty good handle on just what pulled a dreamer from California into America's heartland, where he still resides as a business owner.

"The best word I can think of is chemistry," Wortman said of his first contact with Nebraska at Rio Hondo Community College. "Chemistry is a huge part of any athletic endeavor, and somehow we expected it – and we had it – at Nebraska. Everything just clicked. If I could tell you why, I'd be rich."

If a sense, chemistry was indeed part of the original recruiting lure, and Wortman sees more of that coming. Nebraska's way from California recruits that he thinks will see the same things in Bo Pelini that he and others saw in Bob Devaney.

Wortman, Nebraska's offensive left guard starter on back-to-back national championship teams in 1970 and '71, says a number of California junior

college players that Tom Osborne recruited for Devaney in the late 1960s developed a championship mindset, a sense of unity and chemistry second to none.

"I can't explain it any more than I can explain how Marshall Faulk and Kurt Warner came together and won a Super Bowl for Dick Vermeil when I was a radio analyst in St. Louis," said Wortman, who played six years at St. Louis after spending his first four NFL years at Green Bay.

Wortman says players relate to Pelini the same way he and fellow juco stars Bob Newton, Dick Rupert, Carl Johnson, Bob Terrio and Woody Cox related to Devaney.

"You can just see they would do anything for Bo, just like we would do anything for Bob," Wortman said, adding that such adoration was based, in large part, on a physical style of play that Devaney demanded, and his players delivered.

"We had guys who just flat-out loved to get after it," Wortman said. "Everybody who got on the field was

KEITH WORTMAN

LETTERS: 1970-1971

POSITION: Offensive Guard

CURRENT: Owner, Creative Marketing Projects, St. Louis, Mo.

FAMILY: Wife, Kay

physical, even guys like Johnny Rodgers, who enjoyed hitting you as much as running away from you."

Wortman said Pelini appears to be recruiting physical players just like Devaney did, and Nebraska's head coach wants them on offense just as much as he wants them on defense.

"In California, I played on a (Whittier) high school team that didn't win a game and on a junior college team that didn't win a game either," Wortman said. "But at Nebraska, we didn't even think about losing. In fact, we went 32 straight games without a loss. There has to be a key, and I think it was chemistry, which, looking back, was a team-first mindset that's built on confidence and the combined work ethic of walk-ons and those of us lucky enough to have been on scholarship." **N**

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PHOTO BY SCOTT BRUHN

QUICK START

ARIZONA CAME out throwing.

Its first three plays were Nick Foles passes.

Incomplete.

Incomplete.

Interception . . . by safety Matt O'Hanlon.

Cornerback Alfonzo Dennard "jammed" the intended receiver, Juron Criner, "and the kid (Foles) threw it up," coach Nebraska Bo Pelini said.

O'Hanlon caught the ball, his sixth interception of the season, and returned it 37 yards to the Wildcats' 5-yard line. Two plays later, quarterback Zac Lee was in the end zone.

Just 1 minute and 15 seconds into the game, Nebraska led 7-0.

Thanks for coming.

The interception was "huge," said Pelini. "I mean, you come into a game like this with two good football teams,

you've got to try and start off right, get momentum..."

The Cornhuskers got the momentum and never relinquished it.

Nebraska had the higher ranking (No. 20 to Arizona's No. 22), with little else to recommend it on an untypically cool and damp night in San Diego.

"I don't know if we were just content getting here, but we certainly didn't show up in any way, and for that I apologize to our fans," Wildcats coach Mike Stoops said.

"I have to do a better job in preparing our team."

The Cornhuskers were well-prepared. That they suffered no lingering effects from a last-second, one-point loss against Texas in the Big 12 Championship was immediately apparent.

Nebraska dominated on both sides of the ball, as well as on special teams.

The Cornhuskers amassed 396 yards of offense against an Arizona defense that went into the game ranked 21st nationally in average yards allowed (315.83), while allowing the Wildcats only 109 yards.

Cornhusker fans who didn't make the trip to San Diego had to watch O'Hanlon's interception (and Lee's 4-yard touchdown run) on replay because ESPN's telecast was delayed.

"Matt just tracked it (Foles' pass) down," Pelini said. "(I) just wish he would have put it in the end zone. If he'd have had a little bit more wiggle, he could have got in there."

"It was a huge way to start the game, kind of set the tone for the rest of the day."

Not "kind of," Coach, it definitely did. Nebraska never looked back. **N**

- by Mike Babcock



PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK

SHARING THE LOAD

Nebraska's offense struggled this season. That's no great insight. But it carried its fair share against Arizona. "Obviously, the offense was a huge key in doing their part," defensive tackle **NDAMUKONG SUH** said. "That's what I expect out of those guys. We knew they had it in them."

The key was good health, according to Suh. "We got 'em all back, and all our players back, to where they were at the beginning of the year and they played awesome," he said.

As for the defense, "everybody on that field did what they were supposed to do," said Suh. "All we have to do is execute and...play the way we're coached."

WHAT'S THIS?

The Wildcat alignment, with freshman running back **REX BURKHEAD** taking the center snap, was effective for Nebraska, and

a surprise to Arizona's defense.

"It's something we've had in our hip pocket," said coach **BO PELINI**.

"We haven't run a lot of it this year. (I) thought it was a good wrinkle and something that we knew that Rex does well. We had some success with it early and stayed with it a little bit."

The Cornhuskers first used the alignment to open the second quarter. Burkhead gained 34 yards. He also ran 5 yards for a touchdown out of the Wildcat to finish that possession.

Burkhead was the game's leading rusher, with 89 yards on 17 carries – seven from the Wildcat.

OFFENSIVE DIVERSITY

Nebraska, which went into the game ranked 102nd nationally in total offense, didn't play conservatively on offense. The

play after **REX BURKHEAD** ran for 34 yards out of the Wildcat formation was a reverse to wide receiver **NILES PAUL**, who gained 20 yards.

Quarterback **ZAC LEE** also got into the act as a runner, gaining a career-high 65 yards on 18 carries. Lee's rushing net in the three previous games was a minus 7 yards on 23 carries.

"We gave 'em some different looks," **BO PELINI** said. "I thought we had some new wrinkles for them, some things to keep them off-balance and try and stay ahead of the game a little bit, make them react to us rather than...let them dictate to us."

OFFENSIVE MVP

Junior wide receiver **NILES PAUL** was named the game's offensive MVP. In addition to catching four passes for 173 yards and a touchdown, he carried once for



PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK

20 yards and set up **ALEX HENRY** field goals with a 28-yard punt return and a 49-yard kickoff return.

He teamed with **ZAC LEE** on a 74-yard pass play for the touchdown that finished the scoring. "Honestly, I thought I overthrew him when I threw it – 'Oh no,'" said Lee.

"But he's got some speed over there, so (he) went and got it."

Paul drew a penalty for excessive celebration, spiking the ball and flexing.

Was the penalty deserved, he was asked in the interview room.

Paul: "Um...yeah, I deserved a flag."

Coach **BO PELINI**: "It won't happen again, will it Niles?"

Paul: "No sir."

DEFENSIVE MVP

Senior safety **MATT O'HANLON**, whose interception and 37-yard return on the game's third play from scrimmage set up the first touchdown, was named the game's defensive MVP.

He nearly intercepted another pass in the second quarter and made five tackles.

O'Hanlon was among four Cornhuskers brought to the interview room with coach **BO PELINI** afterward. They all sat at a table on a riser and were asked to identify themselves, name and jersey number. O'Hanlon started to say No. 23 instead of No. 33 then caught himself.

"He likes **LANCE THORELL**," said Pelini. "So you know..."

Thorell, a sophomore cornerback, wears No. 23.

THREE STRAIGHT

BO PELINI is the first coach in Cornhusker history to win his first three bowl games. His first, as interim head coach, was the 2003 Alamo Bowl against Michigan State.

Bob Devaney and Tom Osborne, his Hall of Fame predecessors, both won their first two.

"I've got something on Tom then, don't I?" Pelini said with a laugh in response to a question. "It hasn't been me. It's about the staff and it's about these kids, the men that play for me. It's never been about me, and it never will be about me."

QUICKLY

OOPS

Senior **MATT O'HANLON** was asked how it felt to finish the season and his career with the team's first shutout. "Second," he said, "but it feels great."

The Cornhuskers shut out non-conference opponent Louisiana Lafayette 55-0 in the 300th consecutive sellout at Memorial Stadium.

As O'Hanlon answered, **BO PELINI** (who sat nearby) just shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

"It was great to go out on top," said O'Hanlon, "and for our defense and our offense to kind of mesh together at the same point in time; it was great. We all played great."

BRIEFLY

► **ROY HELU, JR.**, hampered by shoulder problems throughout the season, started at running back but carried only three times for 8 yards before going to the sideline with a stinger. Prior to the game, coaches had described Helu as looking fresh because of the time off.

► Offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach **SHAWN WATSON** returned to the pressbox to call plays, after being on the sideline since the Baylor game.

► Coach **BO PELINI** said beforehand that **CODY GREEN** had earned playing time, and the freshman quarterback played: one series in the second quarter and then again in the fourth quarter.

► Nebraska's game captains were senior center **JACOB HICKMAN**, senior defensive tackle **NDAMUKONG SUH** and junior place-kicker and punter **ALEX HENRY**.



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REX BURKHEAD SHOVES HIS WAY INTO THE END ZONE. PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK

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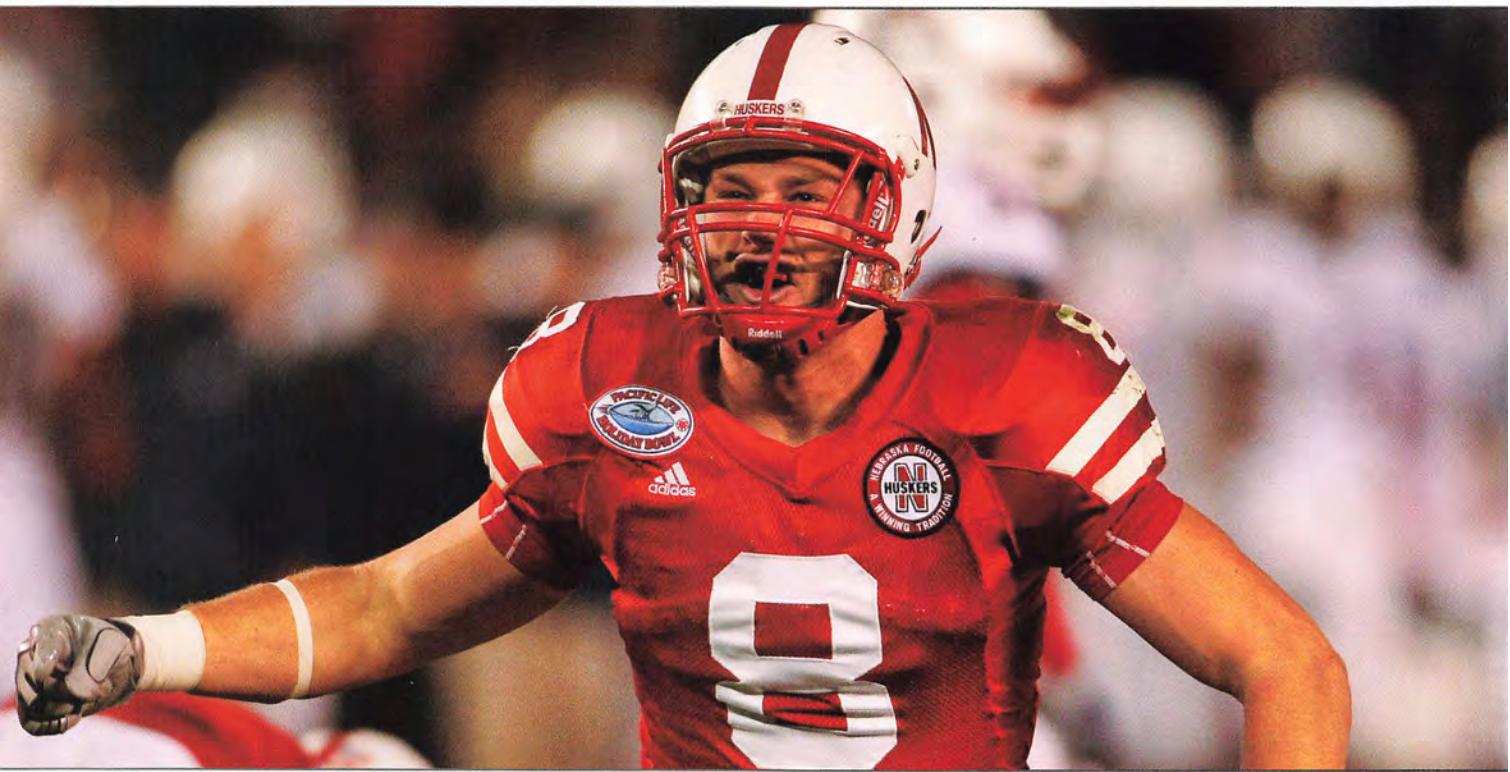


NEBRASKA



ARIZONA

GamePhotos



TOP LEFT: Eric Hagg makes a stop. **TOP RIGHT:** Cornerback Anthony Blue celebrates after another 3-and-out by the Blackshirt defense. **MIDDLE:** Austin Cassidy celebrates after a tackle. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Sophomore wide receiver Brandon Kinnie hauls in a catch. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Graham Stoddard makes a tackle. **NEXT PAGE LEFT:** Phillip Dillard and Prince Amukamara celebrate after a sack. **NEXT PAGE RIGHT:** Rex Burkhead rushes out of the Wildcat formation.

REPORT CARD

RUSHING:

Nebraska's running game got a boost from the "Wildcat." Well, it probably shouldn't have been called the "Wildcat," considering the opponent was the Wildcats. "I don't know what to call it right now," offensive coordinator **SHAWN WATSON** said of the alignment, which featured freshman running back **REX BURKHEAD** taking the direct snap. Just call it successful.

A

PASSING:

Graded on a curve – considering how the Cornhuskers threw the ball during Big 12 play and certainly compared to how Arizona threw it – this probably could have been an A. In any case, it was serviceable, though 74 of the yards came on one pass.

B

RUSHING DEFENSE:

A

Arizona managed a net of 63 yards on the ground and 36 of those came on a run by **KEOLA ANTOLIN** late in the fourth quarter, when the Wildcats were playing only for pride. Enough said.

PASSING DEFENSE:

A

The Wildcats had a chance to score late, reaching the Nebraska 8-yard line. After an incomplete pass from there on third-and-3 and a timeout, safety **P.J. SMITH** broke up a pass to preserve the shutout. Credit Arizona coach **MIKE STOOPS** for not taking an almost-certain field goal. "They deserved a shutout," he said. "We weren't good enough to get the ball in the end zone."

KICKING/SPECIAL TEAMS:

A

ALEX HENRY set a Holiday Bowl record by kicking four field goals, in four attempts. So what else is new? He set the Gator Bowl record with four field goals a year ago. **NILES PAUL** set up two of those field goals, with a 28-yard punt return and a 45-yard kickoff return.



NO COMPLAINTS

Turns out quarterback **ZAC LEE** played most of the season with an arm problem – his right arm, a "fairly extensive tear" of the flexor tendon that produced a "decent amount of pain."

The problem was to be corrected with surgery. "I mean, it's football. You play 13, 14 games, you're going to get hurt," said Lee. "Things are going to happen. You've got to play through it."

Lee rushed for 65 yards and the first touchdown and completed 13-of-23 passes for 173 yards and a touchdown, without an interception. He "had a great night," said coach **BO PELINI**.

"I thought he led this football team the right way. I thought he played with confidence. We talked about that before the game, getting that swagger back, and he played with swagger."

FRIENDS

BO PELINI and Arizona coach **MIKE STOOPS** have a friendship that goes back to Youngstown, Ohio. And that friendship transcends the outcome of a football game.

"Mike's a great friend, and I have a tremendous amount of respect for him and what he's done at the University of Arizona," Pelini said. "It's never fun. I've been on both sides of this, unfortunately, and it's never fun to look over there and see a friend, someone who works...puts his heart and soul into his job go through that. But he'll persevere and get that program going – keep it going, I should say."

As for bragging rights when the two return to Cardinal Mooney High School in Youngstown, "I promise you, I won't even bring that up," said Pelini.

"I have too much respect for him to do that."



GamePhotos

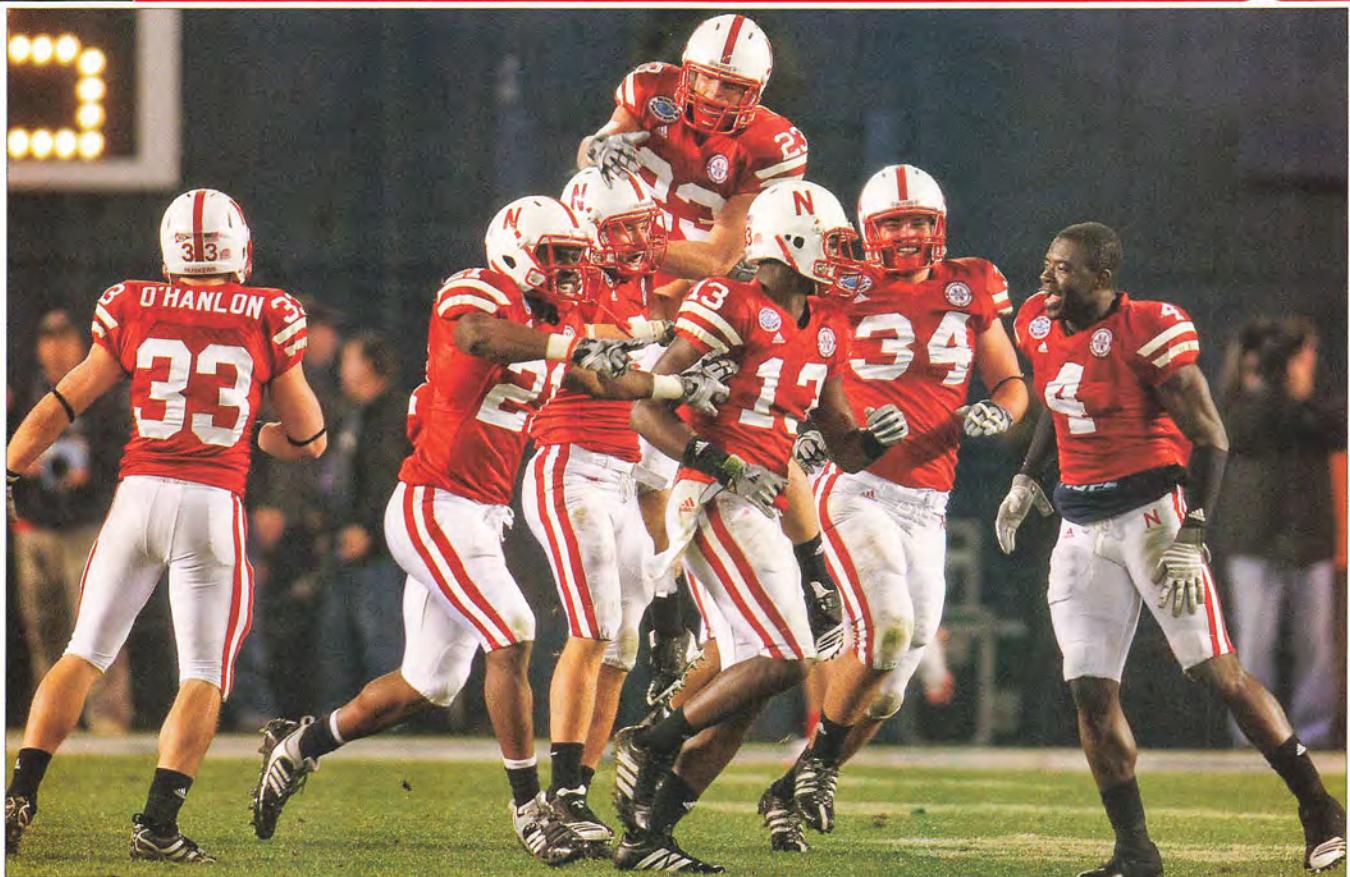


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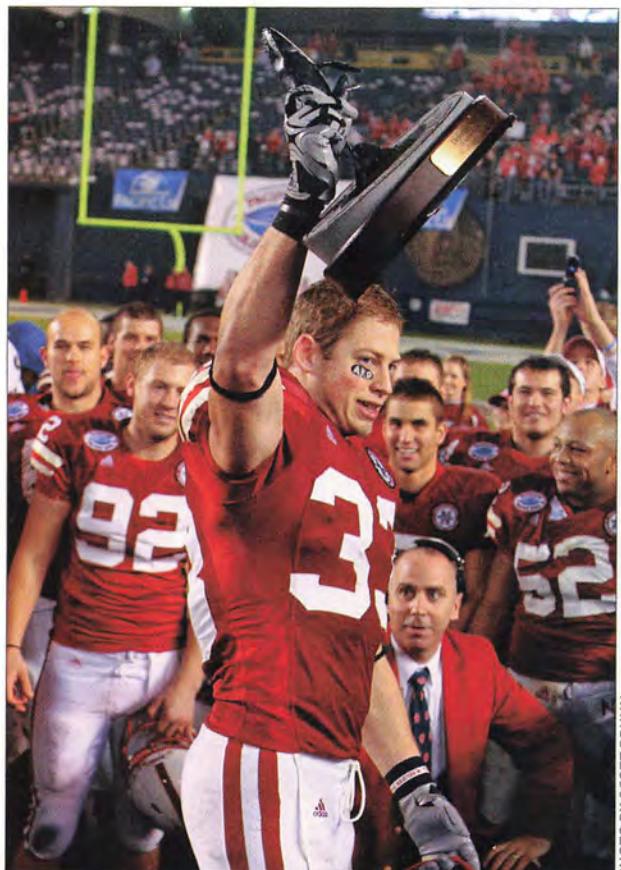


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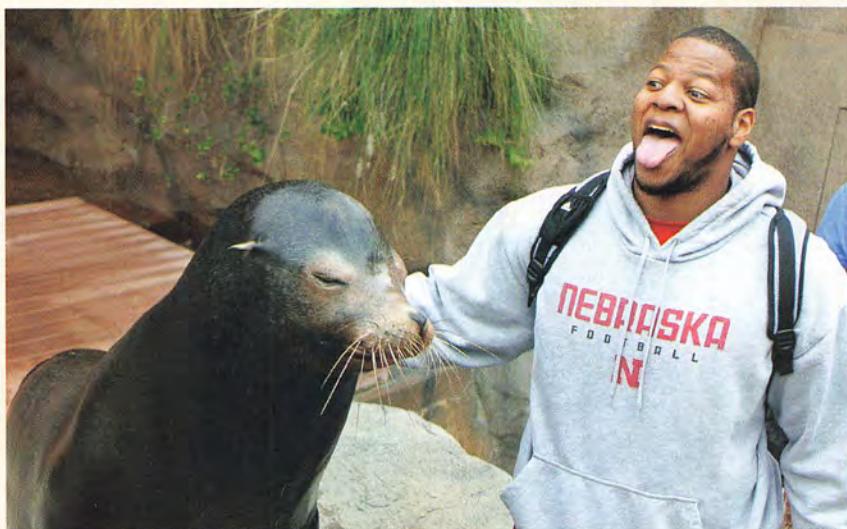
PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK

TOP: The Husker defense celebrates after preserving the shutout. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Matt O'Hanlon is honored as the game's defensive MVP. **MIDDLE RIGHT:** Senior Ndamukong Suh is interviewed by ESPN's Erin Andrews following the game. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Suh tries to fight off a block in the first half.

SNAP SHOT



PHOTOS BY SCOTT BRUHN



TOP: Phillip Dillard and Larry Asante team up for a tackle. **MIDDLE:** Ndamukong Suh gets a laugh with a sea lion at the Sea World. **BOTTOM:** Bo Pelini shares a hug with Shamu at Sea World.



GameStats

SUMMARY

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

SCORING

Dec. 30, 2009

Qualcomm Stadium - San Diego, Calif.

Attendance: 64,607

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Tot
Arizona	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	10	13	10	0	33

First Quarter

	ARIZ	NU	
NU	Lee 4-yard Run (Henery Kick) 13:45 Drive: 2 plays 5 yds 0:48	0	7
NU	Henery 47-yard Field Goal 08:53 Drive: 7 plays 31 yds 3:08	0	10

Second Quarter

	ARIZ	NU	
NU	Burkhead 5-yard Run (Henery Kick) 11:57 Drive: 7 plays 82 yds 3:41	0	17
NU	Henery 50-yard Field Goal 08:25 Drive: 7 plays 14 yds 2:26	0	20
NU	Henery 41-yard Field Goal 00:35 Drive: 12 plays 44 yds 6:07	0	23

Third Quarter

	ARIZ	NU	
NU	Henery 22-yard Field Goal 10:07 Drive: 11 plays 41 yds 4:53	0	26
NU	Paul Pass from Lee 74-yards (Henery Kick) 03:39 Drive: 6 plays 89 yds 3:12	0	33

TEAM STATS

	ARIZ	NU
Total First Downs	6	19
Rushing	3	11
Passing	2	7
Penalty	1	1
Rushing Attempts	20	48
Yards Gained Rushing	84	235
Yards Lost Rushing	21	12
Net Yards Rushing	63	223
Net Yards Passing	46	173
Passes Attempted	31	25
Passes Completed	10	13
Had Intercepted	1	0
Percent Completion	32.3%	52.0%
Yards per Attempt	1.5	6.9
Yards per Completion	4.6	13.3
Total Offensive Plays	51	73
Total Net Yards	109	396
Avg. Gain Per Play	2.1	5.4
Fumbles: No-Lost	1-0	0-0
Penalties: No-Yards	2-25	7-55
Punts: No-Yards	9,374	4,142
Avg. Per Punt	41.6	35.5
Avg. Net Punt	36.6	35.8
Punt Returns: No-Yards	1-1	3-45
Kickoff Returns: No-Yards	7,148	1-49
Interception Returns: No-Yards	0-0	1-37
Fumble Returns: No-Yards	0-0	0-0
Miscellaneous Yards	0	0
Possession Time	21:48	38:12
Third-Down Conversions	3-15	9-18
Percentage	20.0%	50.0%
Fourth-Down Conversions	1-2	0-0
Percentage	50.0%	0.0%
Sacks By: No-Yards	0-0	2-20

NEBRASKA

Rushing	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Burkhead	17	97	8	89	5.2	1	34
Lee	18	69	4	65	3.6	1	10
Paul	1	20	0	20	20.0	0	20
Green	5	18	0	18	3.6	0	8
Ward	2	14	0	14	7.0	0	9
Heu Jr.	3	8	0	8	2.7	0	4
Robinson	1	6	0	6	6.0	0	6
Jones	1	3	0	3	3.0	0	3
Total	48	235	12	223	4.6	2	34

ARIZONA

Rushing	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Antolin	11	69	0	69	6.3	0	36
Grigsby	4	9	1	8	2.0	0	4
Scott	1	4	0	4	4.0	0	4
Criner	1	1	0	1	1.0	0	1
Foles	3	1	20	-19	-6.3	0	1
Total	20	84	21	63	3.1	0	36

Passing	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Foles	20	6	30.0	1	28	0	13
Scott	11	4	36.4	0	18	0	8
Total	31	10	32.3	1	46	0	13

Receiving	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Dean	3	24	0	13
Antolin	2	12	0	7
Turner	1	8	0	8
Criner	2	2	0	4
Grigsby	2	0	0	0
Total	10	46	0	13

Punt Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Wright	1	-1	0	0
Total	1	-1	0	0

Kick Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Wright	3	86	0	35
Cobb	2	33	0	19
Vargas	1	17	0	17
Booth	1	12	0	12
Total	7	148	0	35

Punting	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Crier	9	41.6	55	0	0	2	2	3
Total	9	41.6	55	0	0	2	2	3

Field Goals	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Total	0	0	0	0

Defense	Tac	Ast	Tot	TFL	Sac	PD	FF	FR
Nelson	8	2	10	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Kelley	7	2	9	1-3	0-0	0	0	0
Ross	6	1	7	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Wade	4	1	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Golden	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Mitchell	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Perkins	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Tuihalamaka	4	0	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Hall	3	0	3	1-5	0-0	0	0	0
Horton	2	1	3	1-4	0-0	0	0	0
Reed	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Reed	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Lewis	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Bonano	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Criner	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Elmore	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Mikaela	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Turner	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Vargas	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0

Interception Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Total	0	0	0	0

Sat., Sept. 5	Florida Atlantic	Memorial Stadium	W, 49-3
Sat., Sept. 12	Arkansas State	Memorial Stadium	W, 38-9
Sat., Sept. 19	Virginia Tech	Blacksburg, Va.	L, 15-16
Sat., Sept. 26	La-Lafayette	Memorial Stadium	W, 55-0
Thur., Oct. 8	Missouri	Columbia, Mo.	W, 27-12
Sat., Oct. 17	Texas Tech	Memorial Stadium	L, 10-30
Sat., Oct. 24	Iowa State	Memorial Stadium	L, 7-9
Sat., Oct. 31	Baylor	Waco, Texas	W, 20-10
Sat., Nov. 7	Oklahoma	Memorial Stadium	W, 10-3
Sat., Nov. 14	Kansas	Lawrence, Kan.	W, 31-17
Sat., Nov. 21	Kansas State	Memorial Stadium	W, 17-3
Fri., Nov. 27	Colorado	Boulder, Colo.	W, 28-20
Sat., Dec. 5	vs. Texas	Arlington, Texas	L, 12-13
Wed., Dec. 30	vs. Arizona	San Diego, Calif.	W, 33-0

NEBRASKA FINAL SEASON STATS

SCORING BY QUARTERS:

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
NU	98	126	81	155	0	460
Opp	113	107	93	52	6	371
	NU	OPP				
Total First Downs	226	228				
Rushing	98	84				
Passing	111	112				
Penalty	17	32				
Total Net Yards	4519	3808				
Total Plays	876	955				
Yards Per Play	5.2	4.0				
Yards Per Game	322.8	272.0				
Rushing Attempts-Yards	512-2059	465-1304				
Yards Per Attempt	4.0	2.8				
Yards Per Game	147.1	93.1				
Pass Att.-Comp.-Int.	364-210-12	490-234-20				
Passing Yards	2460	2504				
Yards Per Completion	11.7	10.7				
Yards Per Game	175.7	178.9				
Punting: No.-Avg.	78-41.2	93-41.4				
Fumbles-Lost	21-11	26-8				
Penalties-Yards	100-894	84-678				
Sacks By-Yds. Lost	44-312	19-121				
Third-Down Conversions	77-201	72-223				
Conversion Pct.	38.3	32.3				
Fourth-Down Conversions	5-8	10-22				
Conversion Pct.	62.5	45.5				
Avg. Time Of Possession	30:30	29:30				

OFFENSIVE INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

	G	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Rushing									
Helu Jr., Roy	14	220	1193	46	1147	5.2	10	63	81.9
Burkhead, Rex	9	81	360	14	346	4.3	3	34	38.4
Lee, Zac	13	103	315	144	171	1.7	1	32	13.2
Robinson, Dontrayevyo	8	39	176	11	165	4.2	2	23	20.6
Green, Cody	9	31	170	12	158	5.1	2	49	17.6
Paul, Niles	14	3	50	2	48	16.0	1	30	3.4
Ward, Lester	5	10	44	6	38	3.8	0	9	7.6
Jones, Austin	5	7	18	0	18	2.6	0	8	3.6
Washington, Latravis	4	3	17	0	17	5.7	0	7	4.2
Mendoza, Marcus	7	4	11	1	10	2.5	0	7	1.4
Okafor, Collins	1	1	9	0	9	9.0	0	9	9.0
Cotton, Ben	14	0	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	0.0
TEAM	10	10	0	68	-68	-6.8	0	0	-6.8
Total	14	512	2363	304	2059	4.0	20	63	147.1
Opponent	14	465	1709	405	1304	2.8	7	46	93.1
Passing									
Lee, Zac	13	302	177	58.6	10	2143	14	74164.8	
Green, Cody	9	62	33	53.2	2	317	2	45	35.2
Total	14	364	210	57.7	12	2460	16	74175.7	
Opponent	14	490	234	47.8	20	2504	7	81178.9	
Receiving									
Paul, Niles	14	40	796	19.9	4	74	56.9		
Gilleylen, Curenski	11	17	302	17.8	1	51	27.5		
McNeill, Mike	14	28	259	9.2	4	32	18.5		
Brooks, Chris	12	14	179	12.8	1	26	14.9		
Holt, Menelik	14	15	175	11.7	1	30	12.5		
Helu Jr., Roy	14	19	149	7.8	0	27	10.6		
Kinnie, Brandon	13	15	141	9.4	0	16	10.8		
Burkhead, Rex	9	13	90	6.9	1	24	10.0		
Cooper, Khiry	12	13	80	6.2	1	17	6.7		
Young, Drew	12	5	78	15.6	0	34	6.5		
Reed, Kyler	11	6	54	9.0	0	22	4.9		
Mendoza, Marcus	7	7	45	6.4	0	9	6.4		
Cotton, Ben	14	5	43	8.6	1	24	3.1		
Legate, Tyler	14	3	27	9.0	1	13	1.9		
Robinson, Dontrayevyo	8	4	26	6.5	0	19	3.2		
Hill, Ryan	13	2	8	4.0	1	7	0.6		
Bell, Antonio	6	1	3	3.0	0	3	0.5		
Cammack, Wes	9	1	2	2.0	0	2	0.2		
Jones, Austin	5	1	2	2.0	0	2	0.4		
Henry, Will	7	1	1	1.0	0	1	0.1		
Total	14	210	2460	11.7	16	74	175.7		
Opponent	14	234	2504	10.7	7	81	178.9		
Punt Ret									
Paul, Niles	14	38	407	10.7	1	59	29.1		
Burkhead, Rex	9	4	73	18.2	0	33	8.1		
Blatchford, Justin	12	0	25	0.0	1	25	2.1		
Martin, Eric	14	1	9	9.0	0	0	0.6		
May, Mathew	14	1	-4	-4.0	0	0	-0.3		
Total	14	44	510	11.6	2	59	36.4		
Opponent	14	31	366	11.8	0	62	26.1		
Kick Ret									
Paul, Niles	14	16	446	27.9	0	49	31.9		
Marlowe, Tim	13	12	284	23.7	0	40	21.8		
Dennard, Alfonzo	13	1	25	25.0	0	25	1.9		
Legate, Tyler	14	1	22	22.0	0	22	1.6		
Burkhead, Rex	9	1	15	15.0	0	15	1.7		
Cotton, Ben	14	1	2	2.0	0	2	0.1		
Stoddard, Graham	14	1	1	1.0	0	1	0.1		
Total	14	33	795	24.1	0	49	56.8		
Opponent	14	49	951	19.4	0	76	67.9		

	G	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Punting									
Henery, Alex	14	77	41.4	76	1	7	8	13	30
TEAM	10	1	23.0	23	0	0	0	0	0
Total	14	78	41.2	76	1	7	8	13	30
Opponent	14	93	41.4	60	1	3	13	24	26
Field Goals									
Henery, Alex	14		28			24		52	0
Total	14		28			24		52	0
Opponent	14		24			12		52	3
Defense									
Suh, Ndumukong	14	52	33	85	17-93	10-77	10	1	0
Dillard, Phillip	12	45	38	83	10-45	3-27	3	2	0
Asante, Larry	14	42	37	79	0-2	0-0	7	2	0
Crick, Jared	14	31	42	73	10-63	8-57	4	0	2
O'Hanlon, Matt	14	39	30	69	2-19	2-19	5	1	2
Amukamara, Prince	14	41	23	64	3-13	2-11	11	1	1
Allen, Pierre	14	19	32	51	5-55	4-43	5	1	0
Turner, Barry	14	28	23	51	8-50	3-39	5	1	1
Gomes, Dejon	13	26	20	46	2-7	0-0	5	3	0
Compton, Will	13	17	23	40	0-2	0-2	2	0	0
Hagg, Eric	14	30	10	40	6-32	2-22	4	1	0
Fisher, Sean	14	10	25	35	2-5	1-3	0	0	1
Dennard, Alfonzo	13	21	10	31	4-10	0-0	8	0	0
Meredith, Cameron	14	13	8	21	4-18	1-12	1	0	1
Steinkuler, Baker	13	6	11	17	1-2	0-0	2	0	0
Martin, Eric	14	8	7	15	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Smith, P.J.	14	8	7	15	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Thenarise, Rickey	4	3	8	11	1-2	0-0	0	1	0
West, Anthony	13	9	2	11	0-0	0-0	4	0	0
Lawrence, Blake	3	6	4	10	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
May, Mathew	14	1	9	10	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Stoddard, Graham	14	7	3	10	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Cassidy, Austin	14	6	3	9	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Thorell, Lance	14	4	3	7	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Hays, Mike	14	2	3	5	1-1	0-0	1	0	0
Koehler, Colton	4	2	3	5	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Blue, Anthony	11	4	0	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Dean, Jase	5	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Paul, Niles	14	4	0	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Blatchford, Justin	12	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Gomes, Dejon	13	4	45	11.2	0	40	3.5		
Asante, Larry	14	2	74	37.0	1	74	5.3		
Dillard, Phillip	12	1	9	9.0	0	9	0.8		
Hagg, Eric	14	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0		
Suh, Ndumukong	14	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0		
Total	14	20	296	14.8	2	74	21.1		
Opponent	14	12	128	10.7	1	45	9.1		
Scoring									
Henery, Alex	14	0	24	0	38	0	110	7.9	
Helu Jr., Roy	14	10	0	0	0	0	60	4.3	
Paul, Niles	14	6	0	0	0	1	38	2.7	
Burkhead, Rex	9	4	0	0	0	0	24	2.7	
McNeill, Mike	14	4	0	0	0	0	0	24	1.7
Cotton, Ben	14	2	0	0	0	0	0	12	0.9
Green, Cody	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	12	1.3
Robinson, Dontrayevyo	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	12	1.5
Asante, Larry	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.4
Blatchford, Justin	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.5
Brooks, Chris	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.5
Cooper, Khiry	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.5
Gilleylen, Curenski	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.5
Hill, Ryan	13	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.5
Holt, Menelik	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.4
Lee, Zac	13	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.5
Legate, Tyler	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.4
O'Hanlon, Matt	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.4
Total	14	40	24	0	38	1	352	25.1	
Opponent	1								

RecruitingNotebook

Huskers looking at dual-threat QB

BY SEAN STEVENS

Although not a single quarterback on the current roster will exhaust his eligibility, as Nebraska saw this year with the departure of **PATRICK WITT** and injury to **KODY SPANO**, you can never have enough talented QBs on your roster. So the Huskers will continue to look for a difference-maker.

One possibility is **BRION CARNES**, a 6-foot, 181-pound, dual-threat quarterback from Bradenton, Fla. Manatee. The cousin of Husker legend **TOMMIE FRAZIER**, Carnes is committed to South Florida but may take additional visits.

"(Frazier) and I communicate with each other pretty regularly. He talked to me a little bit about my Nebraska offer and asked how I felt about it. I told him that Nebraska is an up-and-coming program doing big things. They (have) potential with their spread offense and sprinkling in a little bit of option. They have some potential to do big things next year."

Carnes wants to play quarterback in college.

"Most colleges will tell you straight-up that you have the ability to play other positions in college," Carnes said. "Most coaches tell me that they like me as an athlete but they see me first and foremost at quarterback. They tell me that they like my arm strength and my dual-threat abilities."

Another option is 6-foot-1, 185-pound **KAIN COLTER** of Englewood, Colo., Cherry Creek High School. Colter committed to Stanford, but difficulties with his application reopened his recruitment. He's considering Arizona State, Northwestern, Nebraska and TCU.



"I have interest in Nebraska," Colter said. "They have a great tradition, my dad played for (Colorado), so they always played them. We've always had a respect for Nebraska."

He also wants to play QB in college.

"I just want the opportunity to play quarterback wherever I end up," Colter said. "I'd like to go to a school that gives me a chance to play quarterback first and then if it doesn't end up working out, that would be fine and I'd be willing to play somewhere else."

STAYING IN IT WITH OWA

Just before New Year's Day, defensive end **OWAMAGBE ODIGHIZUWA**, of Portland, Ore., David Douglas High cut the list of schools he was considering from seven to four, eliminating Nebraska, Florida and California.

"Florida and Nebraska are obviously great programs, but for me I didn't feel too comfortable about the distance. It was important for me to be a little bit closer to home," he said.

However, NU is now back in the

race for the 6-foot-3, 234-pounder's commitment. He spoke with Husker pledge **ANDREW RODRIGUEZ** at the U.S. Army All-American Bowl, and Rodriguez laid things out for him.

"I talked to him, yeah," Rodriguez said. "I told him that, 'You'd be stupid not to go to Nebraska.' Yeah I really told him that. He's considering it. I told him the fans, it's so loud down there you can't even hear the count, or the play – anything. And, those fans out there for defense will get you up and jacked."

Even before talking with Rodriguez, Odighizuwa had reopened his recruitment with Nebraska's **JOHN PAPUCHIS**.

"He was real happy to hear it," Odighizuwa said. "He had e-mailed me and he was just asking me if my decision was solid and if that's what I'm really feeling. To be honest, I thought about it and I wasn't really super sure about it. So I called him back and said that I want to keep getting recruited by them and see what happens."

"Even when I did eliminate them, that was the only school that I thought, 'Maybe I let them go too soon and stuff like that'. What drew me back to them is just what they do with their defense. It's undeniable what **BO PELINI** and their staff does coming from LSU, a big-time school, coming to Nebraska, bringing them back up. What they do with the d-line I know is legit."

BELL IS COMMIT NO. 18

Nebraska planned to take another receiver in the 2010 recruiting class, and in early January, Boulder, Colo.,

Fairview's Kenny Bell became that commitment.

"It's hard to list all the things I like because I'd be on the phone for the next hour and a half with you," Bell said about NU. "The two or three things I think would be the pride and the tradition of the football team. It doesn't get better anywhere else. The coaching staff, unbelievable, coach Pelini, coach (TED) GILMORE will take everyone that plays under them to places they can't take themselves. I'd have to say the atmosphere as well."

At 6-foot-2 and 173 pounds, Bell could play either receiver or defensive back.

"They said they're going to get through the summer and they're just going to throw me on both sides," Bell said. "Coach Bo asked me where I wanted to play. I don't mind where I play; I just want to play football."

NEBRASKA'S OFFICIAL VISITS

NAME	POS.	HT	WT	DATE	COMMIT
Brion Carnes	QB	6-0	181	1/23	South Florida
Bronson Marsh	QB	6-0	200	1/15	
Kenny Bell	ATH	6-2	173	12/11	Nebraska
Braylon Heard	RB	5-11	180	12/11	Nebraska
Lavonte David	LB	6-1	214	11/21	Nebraska
Tyler Evans	ATH	6-2	180	11/21	Nebraska
Tyler Gabbert	QB	6-0	190	11/21	Missouri
Jermarcus Hardrick	OL	6-6	320	11/21	Nebraska
Jonathan Mack	DB	5-10	175	11/21	
Owamagbe	DE	6-3	234	11/21	
Odighizuwa					
Anthony White	DT	6-3	305	11/21	
Corey Cooper	DB	6-2	203	11/6	Illinois
Jay Guy	DT	6-1	300	11/7	Nebraska
Austin Hill	WR	6-3	192	11/7	Arizona
Derrick Malone	DB	5-11	165	11/7	Oregon
Joshua Mitchell	DB	5-11	165	11/7	Nebraska
Harold Mobley	ATH	6-4	225	11/7	
Tobi Okuyemi	DE	6-3	250	11/7	Nebraska
Tyler Slavin	WR	6-2	182	11/7	Arizona
Giovanni Bernard	RB	5-9	198	10/24	Notre Dame
Curtis Carter	ATH	5-10	161	10/17	TCU
Quincy Enunwa	WR	6-2	200	10/17	Nebraska
Andre Hal	DB	6-0	170	10/17	Vanderbilt
Derron Smith	DB	5-11	173	10/17	
Ciante Evans	DB	5-11	170	9/26	Nebraska
Chase Harper	TE	6-6	248	9/26	Nebraska
Joshua Reese	WR	6-1	182	9/26	Central Florida
Chase Rome	DE	6-3	290	9/26	Nebraska
Bud Sasser	WR	6-3	200	9/26	Missouri
Bobby Swigert	WR	6-1	175	9/26	Boston College
Colin Tanigawa	OL	6-3	286	9/26	Washington
Willis Wright	WR	6-2	185	9/26	
Harvey Jackson	DB	6-2	185	9/5	Nebraska
Tejay Johnson	ATH	6-2	190	9/5	Rutgers
Mike Moudy	OL	6-7	291	9/5	Nebraska
Donovan Vestal	DE	6-5	240	9/5	Nebraska



IN STATE SPOTLIGHT

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

Lincoln Southeast defensive lineman **JAKE COTTON** is one of three in-state commitments in

Nebraska's 2010 recruiting class. The 6-foot-7, 265-pound Cotton is the son of Husker offensive line coach **BARNEY COTTON** and the brother of NU tight end **BEN COTTON**. Huskers Illustrated caught with Cotton for this week's in-state recruiting spotlight.

CALLAHAN: What's it like having a dad that coaches college football?

COTTON: There's a lot of perks and there's a lot of negatives. Having a dad as a coach you have someone at your side every step of the way that knows the game and everything about it. He can just help you out with everything whether it is leadership or technique, just anything about the game. The negatives would be you don't really see him much and they're bashed on the Internet and in the papers and stuff like that.

CALLAHAN: How much do people ask you about the Huskers since your dad coaches there, your brother plays there and you'll be playing there next year?

COTTON: I got it quite a bit at first, every day when I first moved here. People would ask me "who's going to play?" or "what did this guy do?" or "did this really happen?" or "is this rumor true?" I kind of got the message out that I wouldn't have any information about that kind of stuff.

CALLAHAN: Talk about your recruiting process and how it all played out with Nebraska offering you?

COTTON: I would say I developed into a completely different player. Going off of my junior year I really wasn't expecting to play at Nebraska. The more weight I put on, the stronger I got and the faster I got it became more of a possibility. Having as good of a camp as I did in the summer it started to become a possibility for me to play for them. During the season I was getting a lot of feedback from them, and then Coach Bo (Pelini) ended up going to my Norfolk game and offered me two weeks later.

CALLAHAN: What's your favorite show to watch on television?

COTTON: I would say "Family Guy" is my favorite show to watch.

CALLAHAN: You're obviously a big guy. What's the most food you've ever eaten in one sitting?

COTTON: It probably was at HuHot I would say. During a pre-game meal I ate five or six plates of food the night before a game.

CALLAHAN: If you could have dinner with any three famous people, who would they be and why?

COTTON: Brett Favre, just because I grew up a Packer fan. I had two Brett Favre jerseys growing up. Ben Franklin because he's one of the founding fathers and laid the groundwork down for our country. He's a jack of all trades. The last guy would be Garth Brooks because I would like to have a little country at the table.

RecruitingNotebook

Hardrick signs letter of intent

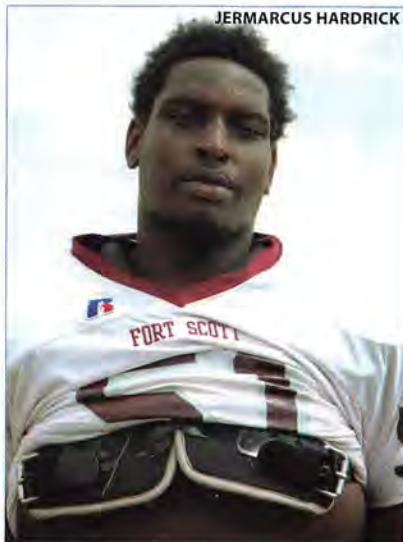
by Mike Matya

Fort Scott, Kan., Community College teammates **JERMARCUS HARDRICK** and **LAVONTE DAVID** committed to Nebraska Dec. 9, and both were hoping to sign with the Huskers a week later in the early junior college signing period.

However, only offensive tackle Hardrick was able to ink his letter of intent Dec. 16, in time for the second semester of school at NU and to be able to participate in spring practice. The 6-foot-7, 315-pounder has his eyes on the starting left tackle spot.

"I'll be playing left tackle. I'm mean, aggressive, and I really love football a lot. I do have a redshirt year left, but no sir, I'm not at all going to use it."

Hardrick is rated No. 13 overall in the



2010 Rivals.com junior college top 50. He was originally committed to LSU, but had a change of heart when he made an official visit to Lincoln in late November for the Kansas State game.

"Well, I really wanted to play with my teammates in junior college. 'BK' (**BRANDON KINNIE**) was already there, and Lavonte was going with me. I wanted to go to a place to concentrate on nothing but football and school, and I felt that at Nebraska. Plus, it had that big family feel."

The hospitality he felt from Husker Nation also helped sway him to change his commitment.

"The fans, I've never seen anything like it, never. From when I came to Nebraska on my visit until the time that I left people would holler my name. And the fans stood for the whole game. I've never seen anything like it."

David, a linebacker, will sign with the rest of the 2010 class on Feb. 3. Fort Scott coach Jeff Sims explained why.

"Hardrick had an advantage over Lavonte David in that he arrived as a freshman in the summer and was able to pass 12 credit hours before Lavonte, who is probably one of the better students I've had – better than most JUCO guys."

"He's been trying to accelerate his graduation, but it might be too much for even him. The bottom line is both are great kids, both are going to sign with Nebraska, and both are fired up about being Cornhuskers."

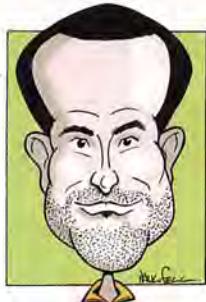
In a final note, former NU commits, quarterback **TYLER GABBERT** and receiver **CURTIS CARTER**, have pledged to new schools. Gabbert will be joining brother Blaine at Missouri, and Carter is headed to TCU. **N**

2010 Nebraska Commitment List (18)

Name (Rivals.com ranking)	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown (School)
Walker Ashburn ★★★	DE	6-3	245	River Ridge, La. (John Curtis)
Kenny Bell ★★★	ATH	6-2	173	Boulder, Colo. (Fairview)
Jake Cotton ★★	ATH	6-7	265	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
Lavonte David ★★★★	LB	6-1	214	Fort Scott, Kan. (Fort Scott CC)
Quincy Enunwa	WR	6-2	200	Moreno Valley, Calif. (Rancho Verde)
Ciante Evans ★★★	CB	5-11	170	Arlington, Texas (Juan Seguin)
Tyler Evans ★★	ATH	6-2	180	Waverly, Neb. (Waverly)
Jay Guy ★★★	DT	6-1	300	Aldine, Texas (Eisenhower)
Jermarcus Hardrick ★★★★	OL	6-7	315	Fort Scott, Kan. (Fort Scott CC)
Chase Harper ★★★★	TE	6-6	248	Carsicana, Texas (Navarro JC)
Braylon Heard ★★★★	RB	5-11	180	Youngstown, Ohio (Cardinal Mooney)
Harvey Jackson ★★★	DB	6-2	185	Missouri City, Texas (Hightower)
Joshua Mitchell ★★★	DB	5-11	165	Corona, Calif. (Eleanor Roosevelt)
Mike Moudy ★★★	OL	6-7	291	Castle Rock, Colo. (Douglas County)
Tobi Okuyemi ★★★	DE	6-3	250	Plymouth, Minn. (Wayzata)
Andrew Rodriguez ★★★★	OT	6-6	300	Aurora, Neb. (Aurora)
Chase Rome ★★★★	DE	6-3	290	Columbia, Mo. (Rock Bridge)
Donovan Vestal ★★★	DE	6-5	240	Arlington, Texas (Bowie)

2011 Nebraska Commitment List (2)

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown (School)
Tyler Moore	OL	6-6	290	Clearwater, Fla. (Countryside)
Ryne Reeves	OL	6-3	286	Crete, Neb. (Crete)



DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS

BY JOHN TALMAN
RECRUITING PUBLISHER,
HUSKERSILLUSTRATED.COM

For Pelini, there are no "soft" commitments

NEBRASKA HEAD COACH Bo Pelini made it clear before the Holiday Bowl game what he thought about recruits taking visits. Plainly speaking, they're not commits if they're visiting other programs after pulling the trigger for the Big Red.

"It's like saying I'm going to go on a date the night before I go walk down the aisle," Pelini said in mid-December. "It doesn't make a lot of sense to me."

To be honest, you really can't blame him.

Prior to this particular post-practice interview, 4-star quarterback Tyler Gabbert had de-committed from the Huskers and committed to Missouri. Gabbert said he had a phone conversation with offensive coordinator Shawn Watson to deliver the news he was taking an official visit to Missouri. Though it was the "official" visit he finally had planned to take, he had been to Columbia several times to see his older brother Blaine Gabbert. Blaine also de-committed from Nebraska during the uncertain days surrounding the Bill Callahan exit from Nebraska as the head coach.

Along with Gabbert, fellow 4-star wide receiver Curtis Carter also de-committed from Nebraska shortly after telling his recruiting coach, John Papuchis, before the Big 12 championship game that he also was going to officially visit Missouri.

Carter is now part of TCU's 2010 recruiting class.

Pelini said his approach is that he won't

accept a commitment from a prospect who still wants to take a visit. But with that, he also doesn't use pressure to get a prospect to give his pledge at the end of his official visit.

"I don't sit there and try to pressure a lot of guys and get them into my office and try to get them to commit," Pelini said. "They're 17- or 18-year-old kids. If you get them to do that, then all of sudden they're like 'I did it because I felt like I was pressured into doing it,' and that's when you have problems."

This is another valid point

And in this day and age of recruiting pressure, soft commits seem to be the norm. Pelini obviously has experienced that firsthand. Though it may be more common, the majority of commits stay firm in their decision without taking other visits but don't receive the publicity that the wavering recruits do.

Regardless, college coaches such as Pelini are making a statement that they want to take control of the situation early and hopefully put an end to the issues that come up with a prospect leaving them without a key player come letter-of-intent signing day.

By not accepting commits from recruits that are taking other visits or parting ways with previous pledges that decide to take late trips, Nebraska can continue to pursue other options. With recruiting being the lifeblood of any college program, one position miss could make or break a

championship run. It's important to fill all the needs possible in any year, and late switches do plenty to derail that agenda.

If you're taking visits, you're not committed.

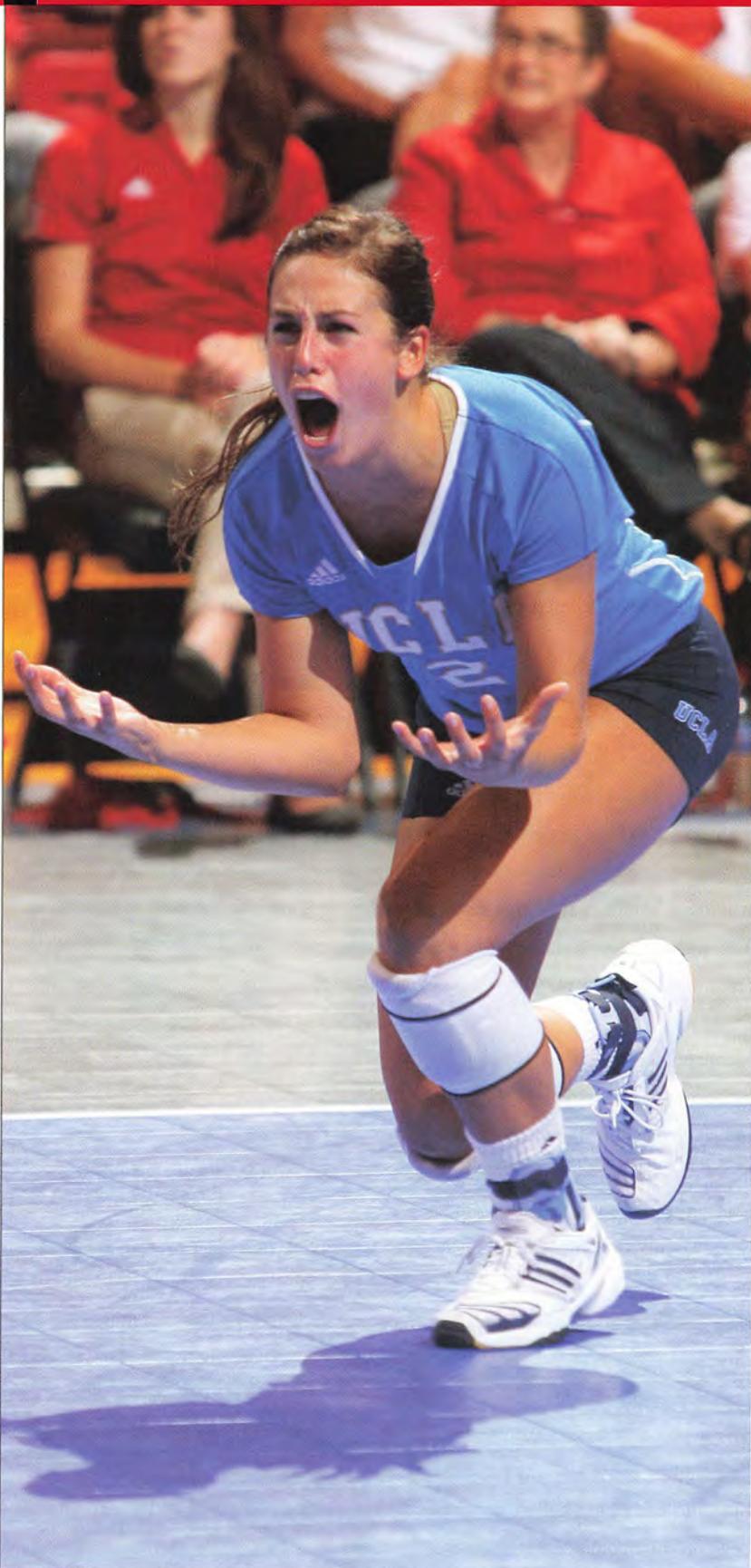
In 2011, Nebraska already is off to a fantastic start. With 18 commitments for 2010, all the prospects appear very solid with their intentions to sign in February. With Pelini's program on the rise, recruiting options will get more plentiful. A tougher approach won't hurt the Huskers for the most part, but help them in the long run – especially with their recent on-the-field success.

In the same sense, some of the nation's top recruits have looked around and ended up staying at the same school they committed to. Not to mention, Nebraska has benefitted from the commitments of prospects in the 2010 class such as Chase Rome and Braylon Heard, who took their Nebraska official visits after commitments to other programs.

In other words, it's the name of the game.

Classify it how you want, but every program must keep going after prospects no matter where they're committed until they sign that letter-of-intent. The tough approach works, but remember that it's part of the business of recruiting to keep recruiting, even your commits, all the way until they sign on the dotted line for your school. **N**

Volleyball



BY BOB HAMAR

Lauren Cook transfers to Nebraska

Nebraska's volleyball season came to an end with a 3-1 loss to Texas in a regional final at the Qwest Center in Omaha. The Huskers won the first set, but the Longhorns -- who just missed an upset of No. 1 Penn State in the national championship game -- came back to down Nebraska for the third time in the season.

Nebraska coach John Cook said it was the kind of a loss that the Huskers could use as a building block for the 2010 season.

"Even though we lost, this team just got better because now, our team and our younger players -- we have five freshmen -- now have a better understanding of what it's going to take to win a regional final and the things that we have to get better at," Cook said after the match. "Of any team that lost (in the regional finals), we were probably the one team that got better. We will take that into next year. I've seen this happen before after a loss like this."

Cook said all season that the 2009 Huskers were a two-year project. He had hoped to get his team to the regional in Omaha, and that would give it a chance to make the final four.

The Huskers made it that far, but couldn't get past the Longhorns. Still, it's was a huge step in the right direction for Cook's team.

"Your team just takes another step forward," Cook said. "Now they've gone through this and it's inside of them how hard they need to work and how bad they're going to want it."

The Huskers certainly played well down the stretch. Cook came up with the slogan, "A November to remember" and it seemed to work. The Huskers lost Oct. 30 at Texas, then swept 10 straight matches before losing to the Longhorns again in the regional final.

Junior setter Sydney Anderson said those 10 straight victories will give the Huskers a big boost heading into next season.

"That's huge," she said after the regional final. "This team is really excited. Look at where we were in September. This whole season is the max out. We've gotten better, and we're still going to get better. I am so proud of this team."

The Huskers will bring almost their entire team back intact next season. Middle blocker Kori Cooper was the lone senior on the team.

Cooper hopes that she left her mark on the Nebraska program.

"This team has been on an incredible journey and if any of the members from this team take one thing from me, it's that I want them to realize it's about the journey and not about the end result," Cooper said. "I think if this season teaches us anything, I hope that it teaches us that. I'm proud of this team, I'm proud to (have been) a part of this team, and I know they're going to do great things."

Anderson will return for her senior season along with outside hitter Tara Mueller, rightside hitter Lindsey Licht and libero Kayla Banwarth. Second-team All-American middle blocker Brooke Delano will be back for her junior season while outside hitters Hannah Wirth and Gina Mancuso – who played mostly in the back row this season – will be

sophomores in 2010.

The Huskers also added another new setter recently when AVCA freshman of the year Lauren Cook transferred from UCLA to Nebraska. The 5-7 Cook, the daughter of John Cook, will have three years of eligibility.

Luaren Cook, a 5-foot-7 setter, transferred to Nebraska from UCLA, and will have three years of eligibility, while Broekhuis, a 6-foot-5 right side hitter/setter, graduated from Colorado Springs Christian High School last month and enrolled early for her freshman year.

"I think if Lauren wasn't a Nebraska kid, I'm not sure we would have wanted to take another setter at this time," John Cook said. "But she's a Nebraska kid who grew up here and she went out there and gave it a shot."

Coach Cook the Huskers will have some time to figure out what kind of system they will run next year. A trip to China in May will help in that process.

"The great thing about it is we have the spring season and the China trip to sort all this out and we're going to get the best system we can because we feel like we have a shot to win a national championship in Kansas City next year," Coach Cook said.

HUSKER ROSTER CHANGES

A couple of players who could have played for the Huskers in 2010 have decided not to return to the program.

Nebraska back up setter Jessica Yanz announced in December that she would not return to the court for her senior season of eligibility. Yanz, who transferred to NU from Penn State before the 2008 season, is scheduled to graduate in May with a degree in business administration.

In January, John Cook announced that redshirt freshman Kaitlynn James, an outside hitter, would retire from volleyball because of injury problems.

Morgan Broekhuis, a 6-5 setter/

rightside hitter from Colorado Springs, Colo., also enrolled in January. Broekhuis was rated the No. 2 player in the country by Prepvolleyball.com.

Huskers get 2011 commitment

Cook received an oral commit in December from Lara Dykstra of Hermosa Beach, Calif., to join the program in 2011. The 5-foot-11 Dykstra is known as a good attacker who can also play setter, but is also regarded as one of the top high school liberos in the country.

Dykstra comes from an athletic family. Her father, Joe, was drafted by the NBA's Phoenix Suns in 1983. She also has three sisters and a brother who have done well on the volleyball court.

Dykstra's sister, Devon, is a defensive specialist at UCLA. **N**

2009 VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	Red/White Scrimmage, 7 p.m.
Aug. 28-29	Runza/AVCA Showcase
Aug. 28	*vs. Michigan, L, 3-0
Aug. 29	*vs. Minnesota, W, 3-2
Sept. 1	Creighton, W, 3-0
Sept. 4-5	at LSU Tournament
Sept. 4	vs. UL-Lafayette, W, 3-0 at LSU, W, 3-2
Sept. 5	vs. Tulane, W, 3-0
Sept. 10-13	Ameritas Players Challenge
Sept. 10	Virginia, W, 3-0
Sept. 11	BYU, W, 3-1
Sept. 13	^UCLA, L, 3-2
Sept. 16	Texas Tech, W, 3-0
Sept. 19	at Colorado, W, 3-0
Sept. 23	at Texas A&M, L, 3-2
Sept. 30	at Oklahoma, W, 3-0
Oct. 7	Kansas, W, 3-0
Oct. 10	Kansas State, W, 3-0
Oct. 14	at Baylor, W, 3-0
Oct. 17	at Missouri, W, 3-1
Oct. 21	Iowa State, L, 3-2
Oct. 24	Oklahoma, W, 3-1
Oct. 28	at Texas Tech, W, 3-0
Oct. 30	at Texas, L, 3-0
Nov. 4	Missouri, W, 3-0
Nov. 7	at Iowa State, W, 3-0
Nov. 13	Texas A&M, W, 3-0
Nov. 18	Baylor, W, 3-0
Nov. 21	at Kansas, W, 3-0
Nov. 25	at Kansas State, W, 3-0
Nov. 28	Colorado, W, 3-0
Dec. 4	*Coastal Carolina, W, 3-0
Dec. 5	*Northern Iowa, W, 3-0
Dec. 11	*Iowa State, W, 3-0
Dec. 12	*Texas, L, 3-1

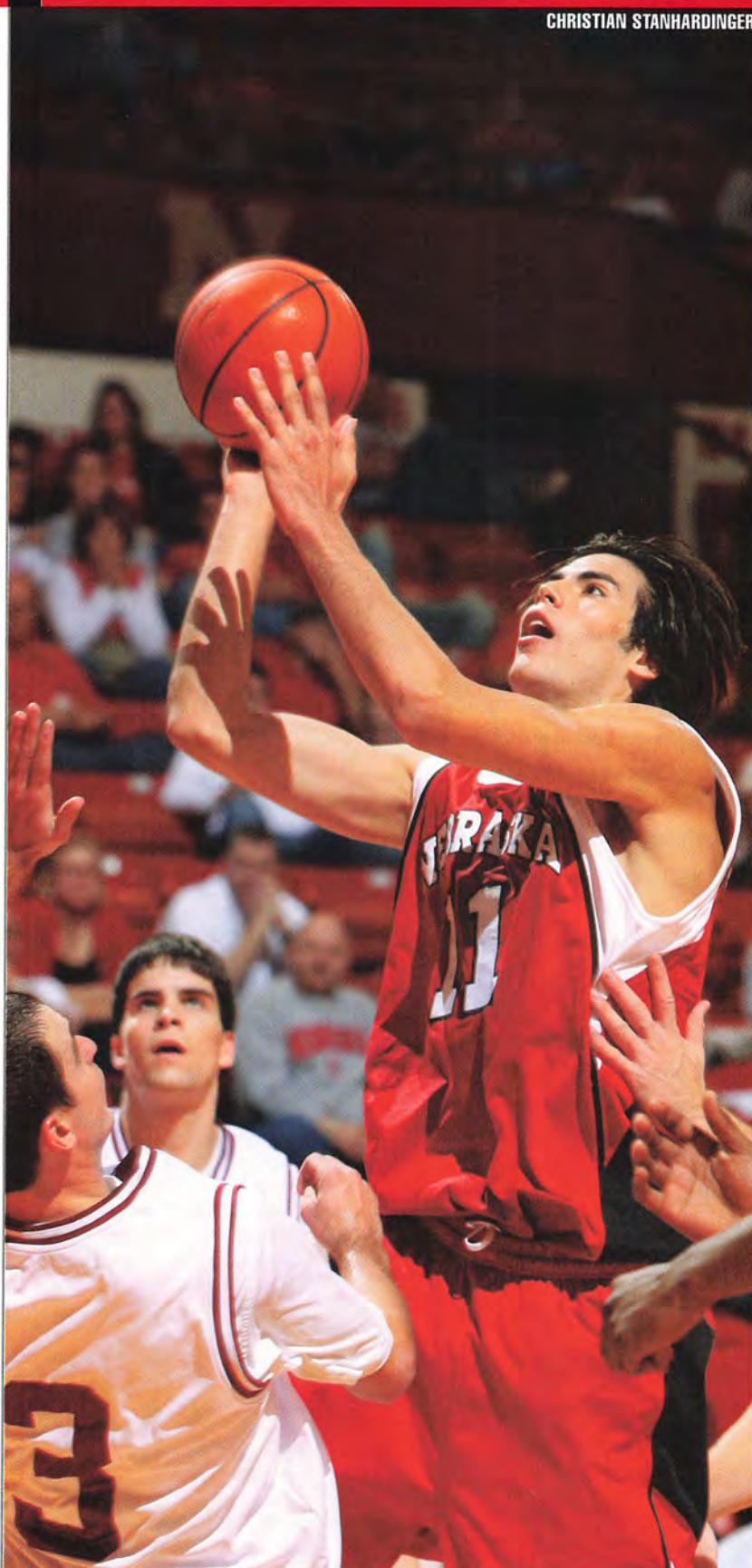
*NCAA Tournament, ^ at Bob Devaney Sports Center

Men's Basketball

CHRISTIAN STANDHARDINGER

BY BRIAN ROSENTHAL

Standhardinger makes immediate impact for Huskers



oc Sadler tried to temper fans' expectations before freshman Christian Standhardinger's debut. Sadler, the Nebraska men's basketball coach, said Standhardinger, a 6-foot-8, 210-pound forward from Munich, Germany, wouldn't be a savior.

"If you're waiting on him and counting on him," Sadler said, "then you're going to be disappointed some."

Standhardinger didn't exactly help Sadler's cause in Nebraska's Big 12 Conference opener at Texas A&M. All he did was lead the Huskers in points (13) and rebounds (seven) while coming off the bench in a tough road environment.

"Christian's been practicing very hard, every day," Nebraska guard Lance Jeter said. "He's been getting ready for this. It just showed the hard work he's been putting in at practice. He came out and produced, gave us the points we needed."

"The sky's the limit for Christian because he works very hard, and you could tell he's been waiting for that chance. He finally got it, and he showed people he can play."

But then again, Nebraska lost the game, 64-53. And Standhardinger came to Nebraska to win.

"I really like how guys like Lance Jeter, Ryan Anderson, Brandon Richardson, Sek Henry,

Brian Diaz, how they really want to win," Standhardinger said. "I really like that and appreciate it. Trust me, I played on some teams, and that's not always the case that everyone wants to win."

Standhardinger had to sit out Nebraska's first 15 games per an NCAA eligibility ruling. He continued to practice with the team but couldn't travel.

When he sat at the scorer's table, ready to enter the game for the first time in his career, Standhardinger admitted he was nervous.

"After 10 seconds in the game," he said, "I felt at home again."

But because Nebraska didn't win, Standhardinger wasn't pleased with the results of his debut. He played 22 minutes, was 4-of-7 from the field and 4-of-5 from the free-throw line.

"I really realized that I'm really rusty," Standhardinger said. "I'm not there yet where I want to be. There's a lot of improvement for me and for the team."

Sadler, not one to be generous with compliments, seemed genuinely pleased with how his true freshman responded in his first collegiate game.

"About what I thought, maybe a little bit better defensively than what I thought it would be," said Sadler, who also noted some execution problems late in the game, when Standhardinger was on the court.

"But overall, gosh, it's the first game he's played. You've got to be happy with some of the things he did."

Standhardinger made no promises about scoring points in bunches but did promise he'd give 100 percent effort, hustle after loose balls and dive on the floor when necessary. His intensity and competitiveness are traits Sadler admires.

"I think you can put him and Brandon (Richardson) and Ryan (Anderson) on the floor at one time, and Lance Jeter, and you're almost getting a mental toughness and a competitiveness that's good enough," Sadler said.

"I think he's one of the few guys who really believes — I mean, he really believes

— he doesn't care who you're playing against, that you should win the basketball game. I don't care if we're playing at A&M or we're playing the Lakers. It doesn't bother him."

Standhardinger played in Nebraska's two exhibition games and gave fans a glimpse of his abilities, when he averaged 17.5 points, shot 61.1 percent from the floor and averaged seven rebounds.

He also went to the free-throw line for 15 attempts, a sign of his aggressiveness.

"He's going to help us a whole lot because he's a competitor," Henry said. "He always wants to try to be the best, and you need players like that who always want to do good."

COLEMAN TRANSFERRING

Freshman guard Adrien Coleman returned to his home in Stone Mountain, Ga., for a short Christmas break after Nebraska's appearance in the Las Vegas Classic.

He never returned.

Coleman phoned coach Doc Sadler two days after Christmas and said he wanted to transfer.

The news surprised Sadler, who said Coleman hadn't indicated to him or to any players that he was looking to transfer.

"According to his mom and dad — he didn't tell me this — his mom and dad just feel like that he has a better opportunity at some other Division I schools to probably play more than he's getting to play," Sadler said.

Coleman played in six-of-12 games and averaged 9.7 minutes and 2.5 points.

Nebraska, which signed junior college center Andre Almeida in November, now has room to sign another player in the spring-signing period. That will likely be high school point guard Kenyon McNeaill, who's committed to Nebraska and has said he will sign in the spring.

ROTATING ROTATION

Sadler said during the non-conference season he'd like to have a regular rotation

pared to about eight players for Big 12 play.

He then admitted that might not be possible, given Nebraska's youth.

"I could see us playing nine or 10 guys, unfortunately," Sadler said. "I don't think that's good. We've just got to have one of those nine or 10 guys step up and have a good night."

Before the addition of Standhardinger, the Huskers had 10 players averaging double-figure minutes. Sadler used five different starting lineups entering conference play.

"I could sit here and say I would like for them to be (consistent)," he said, "but the fact of the matter is, I don't know that this is going to be a consistent lineup throughout the 16 games." ■

2009-10 MEN'S BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Nov. 6	Arkansas-Fort Smith (exh.), W, 86-66
Nov. 10	Hastings (exh.), W, 71-39
Nov. 14	South Carolina Upstate, W, 76-49
Nov. 18	at Saint Louis, L, 69-55
Nov. 21	TCU, W, 90-77
Nov. 24	UMKC, W, 70-48
Nov. 29	at USC, W, 51-48
Dec. 2	Texas-Pan American, W, 81-53
Dec. 6	at Creighton, L, 67-61
Dec. 10	Chicago State, W, 74-39
Dec. 12	Oregon State, W, 50-44
Dec. 19	Jackson State, W, 57-41
	at Las Vegas Classic
Dec. 22	vs. Tulsa, W, 74-70
Dec. 23	vs. BYU, L, 88-66
Dec. 29	Southern Utah, W, 94-61
Jan. 2	Maryland Eastern Shore, W, 74-60
Jan. 5	Southeastern Louisiana, W, 77-59
Jan. 9	at Texas A&M, L, 64-53
Jan. 13	Kansas, 8 p.m., ESPN2
Jan. 16	Iowa State, TBD
Jan. 23	at Missouri, 5 p.m., Big 12 Network
Jan. 27	at Colorado, TBD
Jan. 30	Oklahoma, 12:30 p.m., Big 12 Network
Feb. 2	Kansas State, 7 p.m., Big 12 Network
Feb. 6	at Kansas, 5 p.m., ESPN2
Feb. 10	Baylor, 8 p.m., ESPN2
Feb. 13	at Texas, 3 p.m., Big 12 Network
Feb. 17	at Kansas State, TBD
Feb. 20	Missouri, 5 p.m., Big 12 Network
Feb. 24	at Iowa State, TBD
Feb. 27	Texas Tech, 3 p.m., Big 12 Network
Mar. 2	Colorado, TBD
Mar. 6	at Okla. St., 12:30 p.m., Big 12 Network at Big 12 Championship
Mar. 10-13	at Kansas City, Mo. (Sprint Center)

Women's Basketball

KELSEY GRIFFIN



BY CURT MCKEEVER

Husker women off to best start in school history

Connie Yori smiles as she describes what it means to have two-time All-Big 12 forward Kelsey Griffin back in the fold for her Nebraska women's basketball team.

"It's a 20-point swing... compared to where we were last year," Yori said of the 6-foot-2 senior, who missed all of last season with an ankle injury.

But before Yori can take another breath, she's also noting the multiplicity of her current club — which won its first 13 games to become the first in school history to be perfect over the non-conference portion of the season.

There's junior guard Dominique Kelley "playing the best she's ever played."

Senior forward Cory Montgomery "has been consistent for us the last few years, and she again is giving us consistency in scoring, in rebounding."

Senior guard Vonnie Turner is "shooting the 3 better than she's shot it."

Senior guard Kala Kuhlmann is "giving us great minutes off the bench, and even though she doesn't score she does a lot of things for us that go unnoticed."

And freshman point guard Lindsey Moore "makes us a better offensive team and makes our ball movement better."

So, while the Huskers might be built around the Eagle River, Alaska, product Griffin, feel sorry for the team that thinks the Huskers are a one-woman show.

"In a lot of ways," Yori said, "we're better at every position than we were last year. It's not just about Kelsey."

This time last season the Huskers were scrambling for every win they could get. Come March, they needed a victory in their regular-season finale at Oklahoma State to clinch a spot in the NIT. After earning that outcome, which put NU in the post-season for a record sixth straight year, the season eventually came to an end at New Mexico.

That's exactly the point where the seeds were planted for this season.

Though comforted by the thought that Griffin would be back in the mix, the returning players didn't go about things in the off-season as if that were a given.

Griffin, after all, had required a second surgery on her ankle.

"We had to have other players get better and not just be like 'Well, Kelsey's going to get us this,'" Yori said. And "even when she still is out there, you've still got to be able to make shots, because you know (she's) going to see double-teams and you know the ball's going to be kicked out."

"Our other kids had to get better. And they have."

Griffin says no one talked to her about a need to pick up their performance just in case she wouldn't be back. But that's a big part of why she finds the start to this season so gratifying.

"I think the most inspirational thing for us for the off-season was the season we had last year," Griffin said. "Everyone took it to heart. And coach challenged us."

Still, before this season began, ESPN.com named Griffin one of the country's top-five power forwards. What helped earn her that tag were the last 12 games of the 2007-08 season, when she scored 20 or more points on six occasions, including a 26-point effort against Xavier's inside duo of Amber Harris and Ta'Shia Phillis to lead the Huskers to their first NCAA Tournament win in 10 seasons.

Griffin has picked up where she left off, producing five of the best efforts of her career through the first 13 games of this season. In each, she scored at least 25 points.

In Nebraska's Dec. 30 rout of Albany, she went 9-for-9 from the field, including a pair of 3-pointers, and 7-for-7 at the

free throw line to finish with 27 points in just 22 minutes. That outing followed a 30-point, 14-rebound performance in the Huskers' 77-63 win over No. 5 LSU on Dec. 20. Griffin finished off her non-conference run with a 25-point, career-high 16-rebound effort at Vermont.

"I think if I'd come back and everyone hadn't put the work in they had, or had the mindset that we have, it probably wouldn't be as much fun — so I don't credit a lot of my excitement to my injury," said Griffin, who will be just the third Husker to score 1,600 points and pull down 800 rebounds. "Part of it is, but part of it's just the team's so fun to be around."

It's a 180-degree turn from what she was feeling last season.

"To see the struggles that we went through last year was just awful. It hurt my heart having to watch and to be helpless," Griffin said. "That was my second year of feeling helpless, because I was helpless with my dad, and then helpless with (last season), and I hate that feeling."

During the last three months of the 2007-08 season, Griffin had faced a delicate task of playing while knowing her dad was going through chemotherapy for tongue cancer.

While her plans for bringing the Huskers to greater heights in 2008-09 got put on hold, right around the time last year Griffin knew she'd have to redshirt, she also learned that her dad's treatment had worked.

No wonder she's feeling so at ease this season.

"She's really, really passionate," Yori said. "Sometimes when kids have injuries and they realize what they had, they take for granted playing and then all of a sudden you don't play and you're like 'I want to play again.'"

"Secondly, I just think two years ago she was going through some hard times with her dad. That takes its toll. You're trying to balance academics and really difficult family issues. She had a great season, but yet you could see that it wasn't as much fun. I feel like she feels really good about the place she is right now, because things are going well for her in all phases of her life. And it's been contagious."

Indeed.

Montgomery has become the 16th Husker to score 1,000 points and have 500 rebounds.

Kelley is threatening to shoot 50 percent, a rarity for a guard.

Junior center Catheryn Redmon, back to having a reserve role now that Griffin's back, is even more of a shot-blocking force even though she was playing more minutes last season (after 12 games she was tied for 20th nationally).

Turner, while pushing the school-record pace for most 3-pointers made per game, has the Huskers on track to hit more in one season than they ever have.

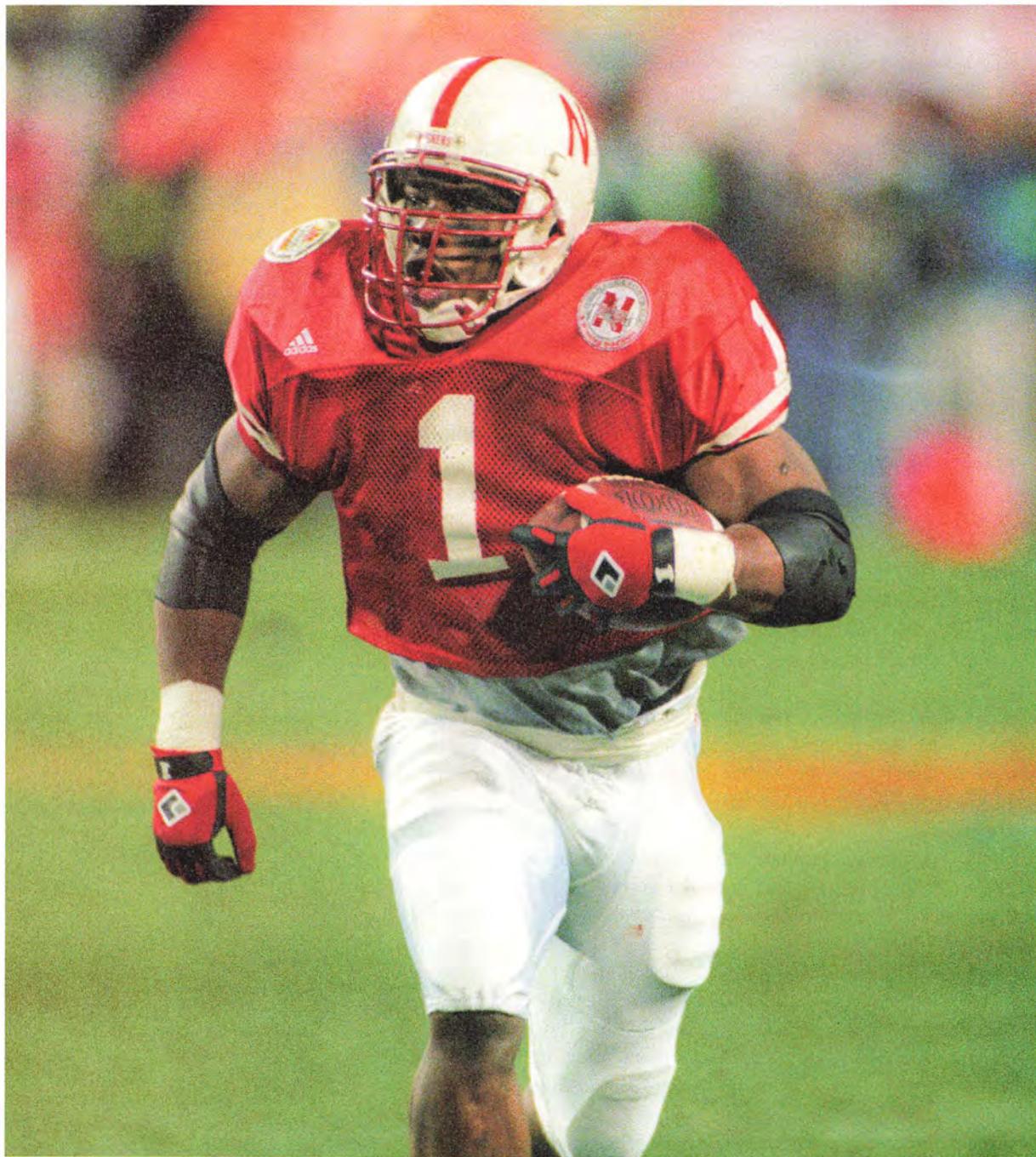
And NU, minus-1.5 in rebounding margin a year ago, held a plus-10 advantage through their first 13 games.

So, no, it's not just about Griffin.

But having her back sure has done wonders. ■

2009-10 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Nov. 3	Pittsburg State (exh), W, 68-54
Nov. 8	Nebraska-Kearney (exh), W, 89-47
Nov. 13	Davidson, W, 86-62
Nov. 15	at UNLV, W, 73-51
Nov. 19	Idaho State, W, 88-41
Nov. 22	Washington State, W, 107-54
	<i>Saint Mary's Hilton Tournament</i>
Nov. 27	UALR, at Moraga, Calif., W, 62-45
Nov. 28	at Saint Mary's College, W, 84-73
Dec. 3	South Dakota, W, 77-38
Dec. 5	Miami, at Coral Gables, Fla., W, 76-71
Dec. 9	Creighton, W, 69-56
Dec. 13	Northern Illinois, W, 69-44
Dec. 20	LSU, W, 77-63
Dec. 30	W, 88-41
Jan. 4	at Vermont, W, 94-50
Jan. 9	at Iowa State, W, 57-49
Jan. 12	Texas, 7:05 p.m.
Jan. 16	at Baylor, TBA
Jan. 23	Kansas State, TBA
Jan. 27	at Texas Tech, 7 p.m.
Jan. 30	at Colorado, TBA
Feb. 3	Oklahoma State, 7:05 p.m.
Feb. 6	Texas A&M, TBA
Feb. 10	at Kansas, 7 p.m.
Feb. 13	at Missouri, TBA
Feb. 17	Iowa State, 7:05 p.m.
Feb. 20	Colorado, TBA
Feb. 24	at Oklahoma, 7 p.m.
Feb. 27	Missouri, TBA
Mar. 3	Kansas, 7:05 p.m.
Mar. 6	at Kansas State, TBA
Mar. 11-14	at Big 12 Championships
Mar. 20-23	NCAA First & Second Rounds
Mar. 27-30	NCAA Regionals
Apr. 4-6	NCAA Women's Final Four at San Antonio, Texas (Alamodome)



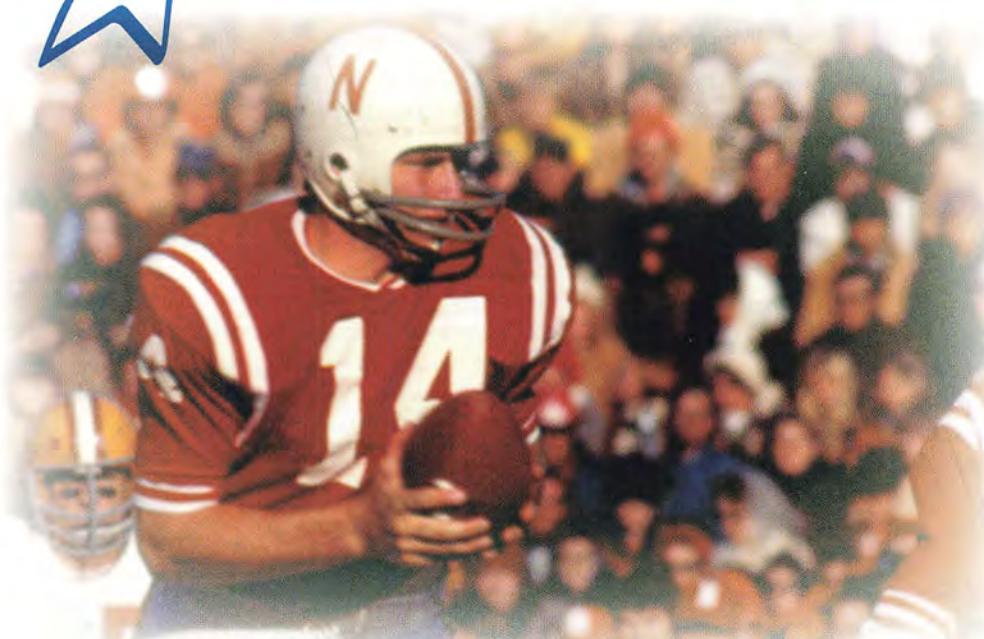
WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN — His off-the-field problems notwithstanding, Lawrence Phillips belongs in a discussion of the greatest running backs in Cornhusker history. He ranks seventh all-time in rushing yards (2,777) despite only one season as a starter and being suspended for six regular-season games as a junior in 1995. He set the school rushing record for a sophomore with 1,722 yards and 16 touchdowns and began his junior season with a

combined 359 rushing yards and seven touchdowns in road victories against Oklahoma State and Michigan State. Had he not been suspended and maintained that pace (he averaged 7.7 yards per carry for the season) he might well have joined Mike Rozier as a 2,000-yard, single-season rusher. Phillips returned at season's end and finished with 165 yards and two touchdowns in the Cornhuskers' 62-24, Fiesta Bowl victory against Florida (shown here).



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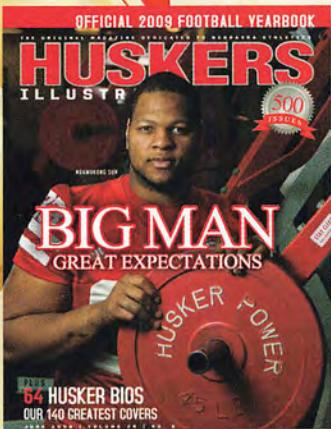
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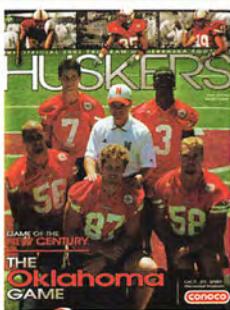
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GAMES REMEMBERED

NEBRASKA 20, OKLAHOMA 10

OCT. 27, 2001 • AT MEMORIAL STADIUM



The victory was arguably the last hurrah in the greatest era of Cornhusker football. The game that would signal the end of that era – a 62-36 loss at Colorado – was only a month away.

Oklahoma was second in the Associated Press poll. Nebraska was third. But the teams were first and second, respectively, in the Bowl Championship Series rankings.

The Sooners were defending national champions, with a rugged defense built around consensus All-Americans Rocky Calmus, a linebacker, and Roy Williams, a defensive back.

Nebraska depended on a run-oriented offense, directed by quarterback Eric Crouch.

But the play of the game was a 63-yard touchdown pass thrown by freshman wide receiver Mike Stuntz and caught by Crouch – “black 41 flash reverse pass.”

The Cornhuskers lined up first-and-10 at their 37-yard line, midway through the fourth quarter, clinging to a 13-10 lead. Thunder Collins lined up at wingback, split wide to the left.

Collins went in motion and, as he ran close by Crouch, took a handoff, then pitched to Stuntz, who was split wide to the right. The left-handed Stuntz, who was recruited as a quarterback but was moved to wide receiver for that season, ran back to the left, pulled up, hesitated for a sure grip and passed to Crouch, who had slipped behind the defense after acting as if he were going to block.

Crouch caught the ball in stride near the Oklahoma 39-yard line and couldn’t be caught.

“He’s a very fast man,” Stuntz said afterward, pointing out the obvious.

The touchdown provided a cushion for Nebraska, which managed only 13 first downs and didn’t average 4 yards per carry rushing, despite leading the nation in rushing offense.

Nebraska’s defense bent but didn’t break. Middle linebacker Jamie Burrow was credited with 16 tackles and one sack, for a 12-yard loss on Oklahoma’s next-to-last possession.

SENIOR OT DAVE VOLK ON COACH FRANK SOLICH:

“He was just like the rest of us. He’s got a lot of football player in him and it really showed. He does a good job of keeping it in check for you guys (reporters), but he was pretty emotional!”

DO YOU REMEMBER?

► Late in the first half, Oklahoma ran a reverse pass

Nebraska 20, Oklahoma 10

Oklahoma	0	10	0	0	-	10
Nebraska	0	10	3	7	-	20

(O) Trent Smith 4 pass Nate Hybl (Tim Duncan kick)

(N) Dahrran Diedrick 2 run (Josh Brown kick)

(N) Brown 27 field goal

(O) Duncan 20 field goal

(N) Brown 26 field goal

(N) Eric Crouch 63 pass Mike Stuntz (Brown kick)

Attendance: 78,031

similar to the one on which Nebraska scored, with freshman wide receiver Mark Clayton throwing to quarterback Nate Hybl. However, Hybl slipped and fell. “When I saw him (Eric Crouch) running down the sideline, I almost had to half-chuckle to myself, ‘I’ll be a son-of-a-gun,’” Sooner coach Bob Stoops said. “Theirs worked, and ours didn’t.”

► Oklahoma was booed when it came onto the field before the game. “That is not Nebraska-Oklahoma. I hope the press will make note of that,” Cornhusker assistant George Darlington said. “There weren’t many (booing). But that’s a lot of crap ...”



ERIC CROUCH

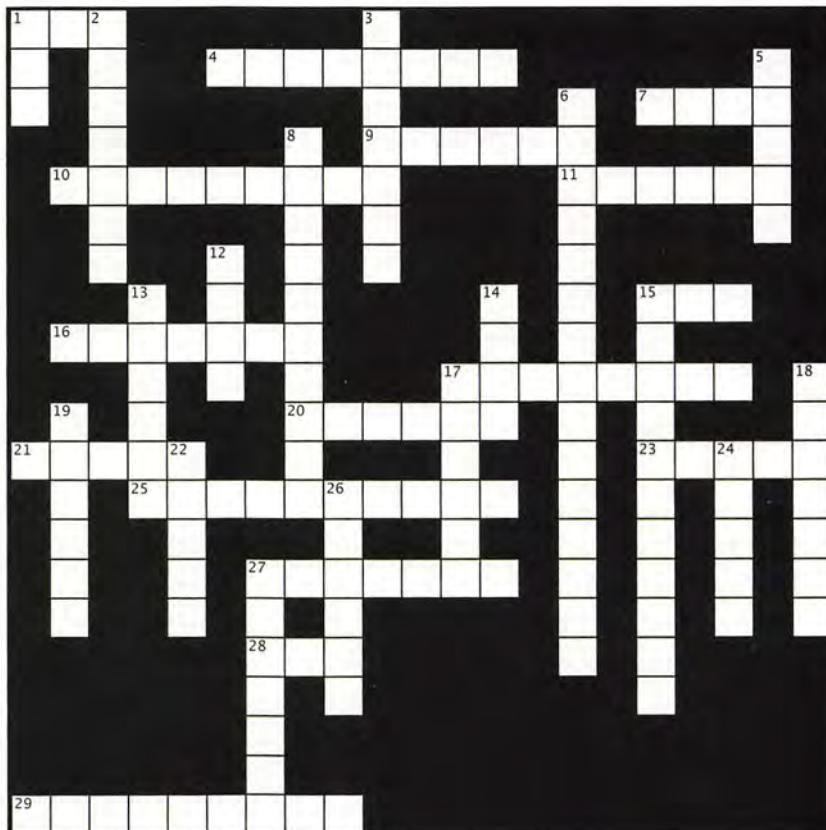
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ACROSS

1. 2009 Outland Trophy winner
4. Ex-Husker linebacker now with Kansas City Chiefs
7. Leading receiver in Holiday Bowl
9. 2009 Walk-On MVP
10. Leader in pass breakups in 2009
11. Ex-Husker linebacker now with New Orleans Saints
15. 2009 Lombardi Award winner
16. Leader in interceptions in 2009
17. Leading rusher in Holiday Bowl
20. 1997 Outland Trophy winner
21. Oct. 16 opponent
23. Ex-Husker offensive lineman now with New Orleans Saints
25. April 17 event
27. 2011 non-conference road opponent
28. Scored first touchdown in Holiday Bowl
29. 1982 Outland, Lombardi winner

DOWN

1. 2009 AP National Player of the Year
 2. 2009 offensive captain
 3. Leading tackler in Holiday Bowl
 5. Had 2 sacks in Holiday Bowl
 6. Opponent in 2010 opener
 8. 2010 non-conference road opponent
 12. Scored 10 touchdowns in 2009
 13. Turner Gill's new school
 14. Number of Alex Henery field goals in Holiday Bowl
 15. 1983 Outland, Lombardi winner
 17. Ex-Husker defensive back now with Chicago Bears
 18. 1997 Lombardi Award winner
 19. Leading scorer in 2009
 22. Quarterback who missed 2009 season with injury
 24. 2009 Lifter of the Year
 26. 1972 Outland, Lombardi winner
 27. Formation NU unveiled in Holiday Bowl
- Answers will appear in the March issue



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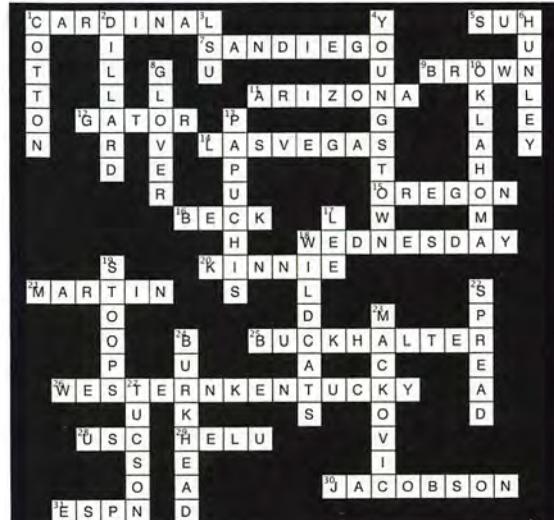
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THE FINAL WORD

BY MIKE BABCOCK

Defense paving road to national prominence

STOP ME IF you'd heard this story.

OK, so you can't stop me, even if you have heard it.

The guy at the wheel of the dump truck couldn't stop, either.

I worked for the city street department in York Neb., one summer while in high school. Maybe it was the summer following graduation; I'm not sure.

Anyway, a couple of times that summer we repaired potholes in the city streets.

Pothole repair was a full-day's job, requiring just about everyone's help. It was a team thing, all hands on deck. The hot-mix (asphalt) came from Grand Island, an hour or so away, in dump trucks, and we could unload only a couple. We had to be ready when it arrived.

Two guys would climb in the back of the truck, atop the hot asphalt, and shovel it into the potholes, where it would be spread with rakes and then rolled with heavy equipment.

Shovel. Rake. Roll.

As summer help, I spent time atop the asphalt.

Trust me, it was hot up there.

We had to work quickly, before the asphalt hardened.

Shovel. Rake. Roll.

On this particular day, we were working on the street behind the Grand Central IGA, late afternoon, with quitting time approaching and the prospect of having to work beyond.

The final truckload had just arrived.

Shovel. Rake. Roll.

One member of our crew, a guy who

had just started with the city full-time, had an idea to facilitate the unloading and finish if not before quitting time at least close to it.

He would climb in the dump truck, raise the bed slightly to allow the asphalt to slide out, then pull forward to the next pothole, where he would raise the bed some more. No more shoveling, just rake and roll. The process would move quickly and be more efficient, he reasoned, easier.

His reasoning was sound, except for one small thing. Once initiated, the bed of the dump truck continued to rise. There was no stopping it and going back down.

So the remaining asphalt, much of the load, was dumped in the street behind the IGA. The foreman, who had been elsewhere, arrived in his pick-up truck.

A mound of cooling asphalt, a small hill of it, blocked the street.

"Geeee-mineee," the foreman said.

Furiously, we scooped and carried the asphalt wherever we could.

Imagine the Nebraska football program as that pile of cooling asphalt, dumped in middle of the street to national prominence by former Cornhusker coach Bill Callahan or former athletic director Steve Pederson. Take your pick; the metaphor ought to work either way.

Neither Callahan nor Pederson was trying to block the road. The matter isn't one of good guys and bad guys, as some still see it. Rather, it's a matter of what works at Nebraska.

Neither Callahan nor Pederson

seemed to understand.

In just two years that mound of asphalt has been diminished significantly. The asphalt has been spread and rolled to fill an abundance of defensive potholes.

Though this metaphor is beginning to break down, the road to national prominence can be seen as paved with defense. And Nebraska's 2009 season could be considered evidence of that.

The Cornhuskers finished with a No. 14 national ranking, their highest since 2001, despite an offense that averaged just 322.8 yards per game – Nebraska's third-lowest single-season average since 1968, when the game was considerably less offensive.

It's not too much of a stretch to compare the offense in 2009 to the Cornhusker defense in 2007. This season's offense wasn't quite that bad. But it resided in the same neighborhood.

And yes, health had something to do with the offensive problems, maybe a lot.

In any case, "I just know this, where we are right now I believe we could beat anybody in the United States," coach Bo Pelini said after the Holiday Bowl. "And I think that's how far we've come."

"On any given day, you can get beat. We understand that. These kids understand that. But (if) we keep working, putting in the hard work and keep making those investments throughout this off-season, and keep doing things the right way, it'll set us up for the future and next year."

Shovel. Rake. Roll.

The right way is rarely, if ever, the easiest. **N**

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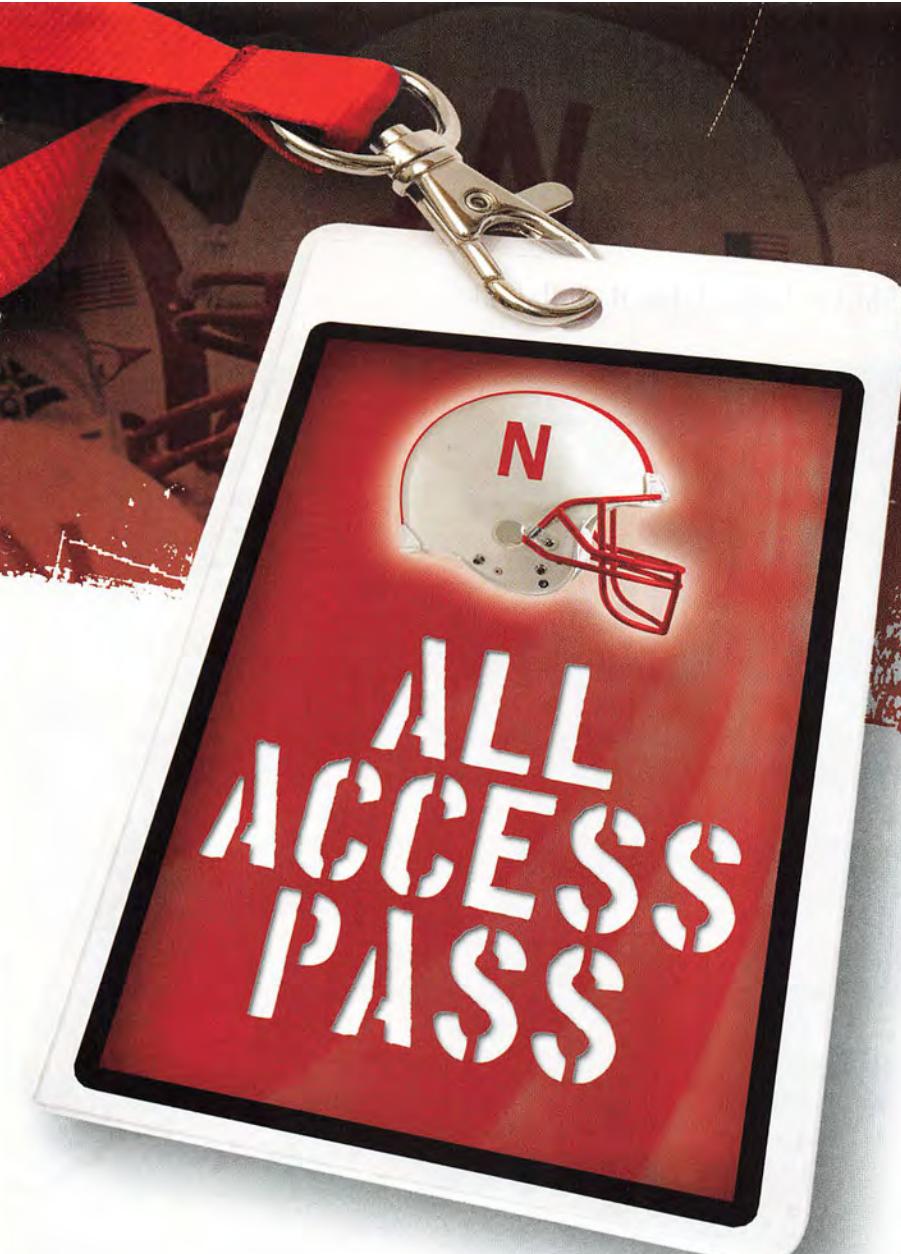
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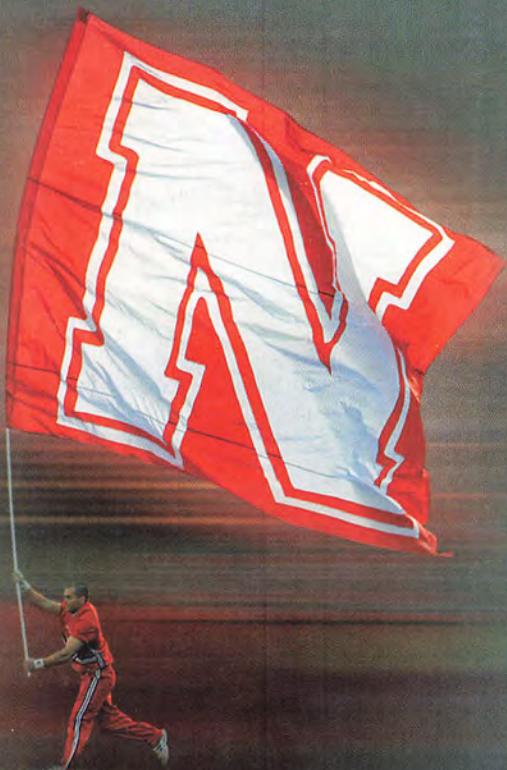
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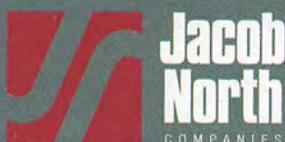
2009 Nebraska Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Location	Time/Results
Sat, Sep 05	Florida Atlantic	Memorial Stadium	W, 49-3
Sat, Sep 12	Arkansas State	Memorial Stadium	W, 38-9
Sat, Sep 19	at Virginia Tech	at Blacksburg, VA	L, 15-16
Sat, Sep 26	Louisiana-Lafayette	Memorial Stadium	W, 55-0
Thu, Oct 08	at Missouri *	at Columbia, MO	W, 27-12
Sat, Oct 17	Texas Tech *	Memorial Stadium	L, 10-31
Sat, Oct 24	Iowa State *	Memorial Stadium	L, 7-9
Sat, Oct 31	at Baylor *	at Waco, TX	W, 20-10
Sat, Nov 07	Oklahoma *	Memorial Stadium	W, 10-3
Sat, Nov 14	at Kansas *	at Lawrence, KS	W, 31-17
Sat, Nov 21	Kansas State *	Memorial Stadium	W, 17-3
Fri, Nov 27	at Colorado *	at Boulder, CO	W, 28-20
Sat, Dec 05	vs. Texas^	Arlington, TX	L, 12-13
Wed, Dec. 30	vs. Arizona#	San Diego, CA	W, 33-0

* Conference games

^ Big 12 Championship Game

Holiday Bowl



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